
A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.13 November 1986
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AMTIX!
MONTHLY SOFTWARE REVIEW FOR THE
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AMTIX!

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ISSUE 13 NOVEMBER 1986

THE MAIN HEADINGS

AMTIX! COMPETITIONS

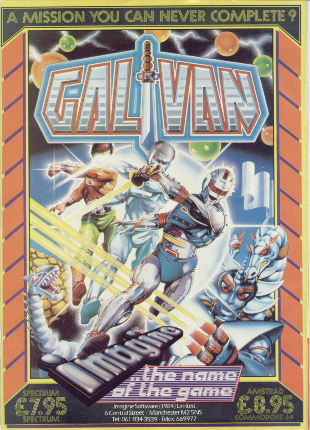
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COUNTING THE COST OF GAMES

Why do computer games cost so much? This is a question that I'm sure has crossed your mind at some time or another. When you have just shelled out a tenner for something you throw away after a couple of hours, you are entitled to a damn good answer.

More to the point, why do some games only cost two or three quid whilst the rest cost at least eight quid. Where is the middle ground, especially as these days, many of the budget games are just as good as some full price games.

The answer is long and complex, and a mite unconvincing. According to the software companies, it doesn't really matter in terms of volume of sales, whether you sell a game for £3.99 or £9.99. Obviously there is a hell of a lot of difference in the profits you make. The people who run software houses aren't daft, so they flog the games for as much as they can get.

Frankly it's up to you. If you want a middle ground to be created, it's the market, that is *you*that has to do it. If you look at it in terms of entertainment for your money, you will probably get as many hours enjoyment out of a computer game as a record album, so you should expect to pay about the same amount of money for both. Both industries have the same sort of costs and the same sort of problems with piracy, so there is no doubt that they could live with these sorts of margins.

There will hopefully always be a place for people catering to minority markets. There is no doubt that someone who produces a good meat-and-potatoes shoot em up will sell a lot more copies than someone who produces a rather esoteric strategy game or a utility package. It stands to reason that people who cater to these sort of minority tastes will have to charge more for their products to cover the development costs. But, frankly, if a software house is producing a mass market product designed to cater to a wide section of the market, it probably hasn't required too much effort to produce. Frankly you are just being ripped off if you cough up a tenner for this sort of game.

So how do the powers that be sell such lightweight product: simple— lots of expensive, glossy advertising, expensive 'trendy' licenses and good marketing. Despite receiving fairly mixed reviews in the press, *Miami Vice*, on the Commodore, became one of the fastest moving products of the last month or two, on the basis of good packaging, advertising, and a 'hot' license.

Not that for one moment we are suggesting that the gentle readers of this magazine are nearly so gullible, and certainly the press are not always right, but it certainly seems that quality and price are not the most important factors when it comes to buying a game.

The lesson of all this is quite simple. You get the sort of products you deserve. Don't just rush out there and buy a game because of the hype built up in the press. Read the reviews, see a demo at a shop, then stop and think. Is this really worth the asking price? Don't be fooled by the big licensed games, there have been very few good games produced from TV shows and films, and the number of really good arcade conversions can be numbered on the fingers of one hand. So *caveat emptor!*, buyer beware.

Malcolm Harding

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

THE MONTHLY SOFTWARE STAR FOR YOUR US GOLD CALENDAR

US GOLD AMTIX

GAMES REVIEWED

TAKING A LIGHT HEARTED LOOK AT

THE AMTIX! RATING SYSTEM

THE JOYSTICK JUNKIES SOFTWARE REVENGE

AMTIX! is now one year old and since its conception a lot of changes have taken place, but our reviewing system has remained the same; and so it should. In the past year we are sure that if it wasn't for our dastardly reviews a lot of you would be lumbered with a great deal of duff games. As it was a year ago since the system was last explained we thought we would give you all an explanation of how we arrive at the marks.

In last month's issue you will have noticed we changed the format of the criticism comments. Before they were just labelled as comments one, two and three, now we have three permanent reviewers, which should enable you to recognise their personal tastes.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE JOYSTICK JUNKIES

Lee is a strategy man at heart, a game which uses the old noddle box usually earns his approval but is also quite renowned with the fair bit of joystick waggling, especially racing simulations.

Dick is a die hard aardvark, (an arcade adventurer) and likes nothing more than a quick scoot round *Knight Lore* castle and all that followed on from that, although *Tempest* currently ranks highly in his top ten as does the professional platform games.

Tony, on the other hand, is an absolute wizz with the old shoot 'em ups and it would appear has misspent his youth ramming 10 pences into arcade machines and quickly working his way up the high score table. In fact he still is! Like Dick he is also quite taken by the quality platform games.

THE RATINGS SYSTEM

Presentation: Takes into account quality of appearance of cover, inlay and on-screen instructions, ease of controls, presentation of menu options and the instant visual appearance of games.

Graphics: The overall quality of detail, animation, use of colour, and smoothness of animation.

Sound: General quality of sound effects technically and aesthetically, whether there is a tune and what quality it is.

Playability: An immediate reaction of how much fun the game is to play and is it easy to get into?

Addictive Qualities: How long will the game sustain your interest?

Value For Money: Taking into account the quality of the game, is it worth the asking price?

Overall: A free for all vote from Lee, Dick and Tony established from the overall feeling that the game generates.

THE SHORT, BUT JOLLY USEFUL, ONE LINE COMMENTS

Under each percentage mark is a small comment which is designed to add justification to the marks, these are usually personal and are written after replaying the game and reading the review.

THE PRESTIGIOUS AMTIX! ACCOLADE AWARD

For one of these coveted awards to be given a game has to be something really special. The number of Accolades given per month varies depending on the amount of quality games we receive. They are not given lightly and a game has to top a mark of ninety percent to have one.

ADVENTURE, STRATEGY AND AMTECH

Adventure and strategy remain under Sean Masterson's watchful eye and are commented on in their specialised areas, they also differ to take into account the varied play requirements. AMTECH ratings are not set but we have introduced a bronze, silver and gold screwdriver award system in this issue.

AND NOW FOR A TEENY WEENY BIT OF FUN

LEE PADDON

Presentation 87%
Crumpled stripey shirts, grey slacks and trainers always went well together didn't they? Well Lee thinks they do!

Graphics 76%
The unshaven macho look has the girls in mail order just weak at the knees. Poor dears must be in agony!

Sound 27%
No one listens to him except himself.

Playability 81%
Not that any of us has tried but we do hear that . . .

Addictive Qualities 3%
He's married, so don't get too interested.

Value For Money 78%
Always good for a quick round at the Pig and Entrails.

Overall 88%
Definitely so cool he doesn't need to try.

RICHARD EDDY

Presentation 76%
Runs out of hair spray so often he often rolls in quite flat.

Graphics 82%
Much better since the pills began working.

Sound 54%
Didn't qualify for an audition for the College choir. Made do with an offer to become a white noise generator.

Playability 89%
After a few pints of Old Flatulence starts muttering things about hay stacks and The Rocky Horror Show.

Addictive Qualities 95%
Mainly where fodder is concerned.

Value For Money 11%
Pre-occupied with sticking up menus around his desk and slavering a lot.

Overall 50%
Yes, he is a bit!

ANTHONY CLARKE

Presentation 88%
The lower half is neat. The top half is normally obscured by low clouds.

Graphics 79%
Sleek and streamlined but the half mast trousers overdo the Hi-Tech trainer emphasis.

Sound 2%
Rather like listening to a tape load at 1200 baud.

Playability 70%
Scrolls well but a bit tricky to understand.

Addictive Qualities 34%
We're not so sure everybody wants to hear an endless stream of high scores.

Value For Money 76%
Suited to the budget range maybe?

Overall 88%
He's going to buy a house — we need a room so we had better be nice.

SEAN MASTERSON

Presentation 24%
Maybe we should explain what a mirror is.

Graphics 3%
Short, not so sure about the sweet bit.

Sound 98%
Lots of it, mainly about his weekends in Manchester

Playability 87%
Self motivated

Addictive Qualities 55%
Like a war game, goes on and on and on and on and . . .

Value For Money 34%
Expensive at half the price.

Overall 76%
A right little cult.

SAFFRON TREVASKIS

Presentation 99%
Pink hair, monkey boots and suspenders are our favourite.

Graphics 88%
Er, stunning.

Sound 100%
Unsurpassable! No-one else can get a word in!

Playability 82%
Better ask Lloyd Mangram

Addictive Qualities 91%
Lloyd's department again.

Value For Money 76%
Beauty, intellectual wit and a umbrella — where could you go wrong?

Overall 96%
Definitely an AMTIX! Accolade.


FIRELORD
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Get spellbound – and hot – with this unique medieval arcade adventure.
Another fast-moving, richly animated scorcher from 1985's Programmer of the Year, Steve Crow – author of "Wizard's Lair" and "Starquake".
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AND NOW, HEEEEEREEEEE'S . . . SAFFRON! Righty Ho, it's that time of the month for me again, yep, when your favourite letters' girlie takes control of her empire once more (Ego tripping . . .) and bashes out her third plethora of paper ponderings. This month things have been a bit hectic what with the PCW show, sorry I couldn't be there all week although I did pop in for about a hour which was time enough to sign one copy of AMTIX! Did you see me there? Christmas is coming up pretty soon and that means the first AMTIX! Christmas special, hopefully I should be having a extra fat *On The Spot* feature where I'll try to publish and reply to every letter that comes my way, so get you Christmas thoughts on paper and post them off to me right now. After all it's first come, first served! I just like to mention Mr Noblett who has had terrible problems with the *Ghost and Goblins* pokes in issue 11, sorry for the errors but it was nice to hear that you liked the rest of the mag. Big sorries to anyone else having trouble with them, I shall ram my brolly up Julian's left nostril. Now then, to the business of the day, Letters . . . The writer of the first one wins himself a £20 voucher for software.

PRICE TAG PROBLEMS

Dear Saffron
Reading your magazine is a delight. I used to buy Crash but unfortunately my Spectrum suffered a serious illness so I had it put down and stopped. I decided to buy a 6128 to replace my deceased Spectrum.

Like many Amstrad owners I despise software companies that charge hefty prices for their software. Living in the Republic of Ireland does not help either. The average £9.95 game costs £15 in Irish money because of import and tax charges. Even your scrumptious magazine is fifty pence dearer.

I cannot understand why software should cost so much. The average game consists of cassette box, tape with program and instruction booklet. This should cost less than two pounds depending on tape quality. The company then sells the tapes to the retailer for about six pounds. This includes transport. The retailer then sells the game at the retail price decided by the company.

I have a proposal to put to the software companies. Why not sell your games cheaper? The company will sell more games, earn a bigger profit, and stamp out piracy. I am not asking you to reduce your price drastically, just a few pounds will do.

I get the impression that you don't test the pokes given in your magazine. Please prove me wrong as I look highly towards your magazine.
Michael Tsang, Dublin, Eire

I have had several replies to my plea for views on software prices, I picked this one because it was well argued and not based on any loose facts. The AMTIX! crew, myself included, feel that the ten pound price tag is becoming far too familiar. There is one solution, however drastic it may seem, and that is a National boycott, from you the public, on all ten pound games that are sub-standard. It is all very well moaning on about it to me, but that won't prevent the companies slapping on the old ten quid tag again. So, if you stop buying the overpriced games, and stick to the cheaper ones, companies will be forced to reduce their prices. That's my view and I would be very interested to receive comments from both readers and software companies on this subject.
ST

LETTER OF THE MONTH

TONY DROPS A CLANGER

Dear Saffron
Could you please give the Amtech minion a good hard poke with your brolly with regard to the review of *Prospell*, this minion claimed that CPC464s and CPC664s couldn't run *Prospell*. Well I can tell you now this is complete and utter piffle as I am using the Rom version of *Prospell* on my nice little Arnold and it works very nicely thank you.

Could you also prod anyone who takes the micky out of Ed as I am fed up with reading insults to that nice old man, besides which I feel that it is cruel to take the micky out of poor dumb defenceless animals. Now that I have finished moaning (will he ever stop? ED! who is not so defenceless so watch it!), I would just like to congratulate you on your new AMTIX! format, it's a lot easier on the eye (grovel, grovel, wonderful Saffron).

I know this letter won't get published (I took a correspondence course in philosophy from MARVIN the paranoid android) as I never win anything, but just in case I do I would like *Dan Dare* and *Mission Elevator*.
Mr B. Gibson, Hants, PO7 7DE
PS Keep up the good work at AMTIX! Towers.
PPS Could I have a signed photograph of all the AMTIX! team (yes I am perfectly sane)

Yes, that was a total and utter mistake by that plonker Tony, who didn't have knowledge of the ROM version. As for the Crumbly one, he's says he's totally resilient to any such jibes — he just lies back and thinks of England. Mind you he can be quite aggressive at times, so tread carefully! Yes, you may as well become friends with Marvin as you've haven't won anything; if you do want signed wotsits then please do include a stamped addressed envelope (that goes for everyone!)
ST

BROLLY WIELDING VIOLENCE

Dear Saffron
What do you think you're on? You have been at AMTIX! a very short time but already you've started bullying poor, defenceless, respected and generally very nice people, with that stupid umbrella. Take for instance Malcolm Harding, I bet his eyebrows have been poked and prodded so much that they are dropping off. Remember they are very rare, there's only two in the whole world, so if little Ms Trevaskis kills them off I'll send the RSPCA around. Talking of killing off endangered species, what about poor old Richard Eddy? I bet his doobries have had a good old prodding. Enough of this crud - and on to more. Why on earth do you keep the Terminally Ill Man? Scrap it I say, it's BORING. (But I like the rest of Oli's stuff — it's Mega!)

That's about it for now, oh no, I nearly forgot. Give (and I quote) 'That hunky brute from Zzap and Crash — Lloyd Mangram' his Hermes typewriter back, it's the only one he's got! So, don't nick it again — unless there's something going on!
Richard Burton, St. Keverne
PS If you don't stop brollying people, I'll be writing again.
PPS What size shoes do you wear, I take size twelves. Nurse, nurse!, I want to go back to my cell now . . . Gibber, gibber.

Hah! — the junkies aren't defenceless at all, what with Dicky and his Cheese and Pickle Roll, gives a nasty prod in the eye, I can tell you. Lee and his pointy joystick (Ouch!) and Tony's taken to interfacing his brolly to a gattling gun (Now, put that down, Muffin). As for dear old Crumbly, there's no way that I would harm the poor chap, I daren't touch him unless he crumbles completely! He's really putty in my hands! And what about 'poor old' Dicky? any doobrie prodding is purely between me and he, so don't get involved. Termite Man went last issue, happy now?. Lloyd doesn't mind me using his typewriter, and there is nothing going on between us — he told me he stopped all that nonsense years ago. Well, I'm won't stop brollying the dastardly AMTIX! crew — it's the only way I can get things done, so I'll be expecting your letter very soon! Oh, I don't wear shoes — I wear Monkey Boots — size six -ish.
Yours defencelessly
ST



WE WANT TO SEE YA SAFFY!

Dear Saffron
Where was your pic in the editorial? We all had to suffer the mugshots of the new male staff, fine for the female readers, but us males had nothing to delight our eyes on.

Please don't tell me off or threaten me with your brollie, I actually bought August's issue of that comic book known by some as AA. I was bored and wanted a good laugh. Something actually caught my eye. It was a small cutting of a letter which appeared in July's AMTIX! It just goes to show that AMTIX! is so good that the Beano, (oops) I mean AA, (sorry if I have insulted you Mr Beano Ed) uses some of it's material.

The amount of games reviewed is fine. I am not such a games addict as when I had my glorious Speccy. I am more of a serious user on my CPC 6128 with DMP-2000 and Tasword 6128, although I do like a good joystick waggle.

Could you please send me a lot of old AMTIX! logos to paste over my future editions. The new logo looks like something from a competitor mag. (I was going to say a rival but there aren't any to AMTIX!). Come on Mr Frey, you can do better than that.

One major moan I have, (and it's not your fault) is the location of the Amstrad Computer Show. I live a few miles from sunny Wolverhampton, which happens to be not a million miles away from the tiny village of Birmingham. Why don't Database or even you mortals of AMTIX! get a show together in Birmingham or even better, for me, Wolverhampton, instead of these far out places like London or Manchester.

A message for someone at Mastertronic:— Why not put some of your games on disk and charge about £7 quid a piece. Good idea huh? After all most of your games are worth it.

I liked the Joyce Supplement and how about a specialist supplement for the 6128 in the future. I liked the look of the Joyce dust covers and would like some for my CPC 6128, green screen and printer.

I wonder if I will see Julian Rignall in Blackpool when I go there. I liked his idea of an arcade page.

A final word. Minor changes are fine. Don't do anything drastic. The mags great as it is.
Christopher Wootton, Wolverhampton, WV8 2DT

Thanks for the appreciative letter Chris, makes a nice change. The reason my photo wasn't in the editorial was because that when the Joystick Junkies arrived they had their photo session with Cameron (Don't worry, it's all cause of art) Pound straight away. However, when I arrived, nearly a week later, Cam didn't seem so keen on the idea of piccies of me (I wonder why? — Ed), but hopefully there should be some photos this issue, if not, then next. Hey, I like the idea of an AMTIX! roadshow but unfortunately there's not enough crinkly stuff to put it into practice. Hold on though, Wolverhampton isn't at all far from London or Manchester by train. Come on get off your backside and make the effort. If Dicky can manage a six hour journey from Penzance to Ludlow (With three changes mind you, and setting off at half five in the morning, pouring with rain.) then I'm sure you can get to London or Manchester, things don't fall at your feet in this life, you poor little innocent chap. No sign of CPC dust covers yet, but maybe if the Joyce covers sell well who knows?
Yours photogenically
ST

HACK,HACK, HACKETTY,HACK

Dear Saffron
In your September Issue, in the Amtips section, I noticed you had printed a POKE that gives infinite time in *Spindizzy*. I must say that it is identical to the one I sent to Amstrad Action four months ago.

Now I'm not blaming you for this, you can't be expected to go through checking so I would like to point out to Carl Jones that what he has done is an infringement of copyright. This does not bother me as much as the fact that he is getting credit for my hard work. I feel very strongly that this point should be made.
Tim Gilbert, Whitby

Are you really an experienced hacked, Tim? If so, then you must realise that if one person goes in search of an infinite time poke and arrives at a correct routine, then when another hacker goes for the same objective the pokes are going to be identical. It is for this reason that I believe that Carl Jones didn't rip the poke from AA, but arrived at it from his own hacking. I hope Mr Jones will write and confirm this.
Yours Pokingly
ST

UNANSWERABUBBLES!

Dear Saffron
Your magazine is brilliant — oh, sorry I didn't mean to say that, it slipped in accidentally. Now the unanswerable questions:-
1: What's all this crud about your umbrella?
2: Why isn't *Leader Board* out?
3: Why didn't I get a Zoid poster when I ordered my game?
4: Why have you got a funny name?
5: Are you a Martian?
6: Have I won the twenty pound voucher?
7: Are you still awake?
Yours Questionably, Richard Nicholson, Norwich, Norfolk

Ok then, smart arse, if they're unanswerable then I won't bother trying. Next!
ST
PS — Well, I suppose I could have a go, mainly because Crumbly is watching me.
1: Brollies aren't crud, they're jolly useful, especially in Ludlow — what with the summer weather and all.
2: *Leader Board* isn't out because it's not ready; come on - have some patience.
3: Er, dunno.
4: Ask my mother.
5: No, Martin's a very good friend of mine.
6: No.
7: Zzzzzzzzzzz . . .

HARPING BACK . . .

Dear Saffron
Complimenting you is not enough (so I won't. Not really. Here we go). Your magazine is brilliant, Saffron is cool, AMTIX! is the tops, you're Superb (overdoing it a bit wot?). It's not often I take 'ye old quill and scroll' and begin to write something, especially a letter, but, because of AMTIX! I couldn't resist it.

Now down to business. May I firstly congratulate Paul Da-Silva on a very appealing letter. I agreed greatly with his views on, subscriptions, competitions and on sections of your magazine that could be improved. Well done Paul, I hope you keep writing and keep the AMTIX! team on their feet. If I were the AMTIX! team I'd listen to him now and in the future.

Secondly, and lastly (good) but not least, I would be very pleased (and I'm sure many other Amsters would be) if the AMTIX! team would listen to Taqi Hashmi of London and investigate this instrument he reports to be a Monitor to TV Transformer. What OTS should do is to find out where this gadget could be purchased if it exists. Then if AMTIX! were to make a deal with the company that manufactures this gadget so that if it isn't selling nationwide us Amsters could buy this item through your mail order service.

There could even be a discount to AMTIX! Club Members (good eh?) Well, that's it folks (Sounds like a cartoon — ST) or maybe, (NO!) Look out if you don't print my letter. (is that all?) yes. (thank God!)
Lakhbir Singh Kang, Birmingham, B21 0UH

P S (more?) yes, (oh! No!) well, (come on, get on with it) I'd just like to say (what?) that. . . .

Sorry we'll have to stop you there, but golly, Lakhbir dearie, Paul Da—Silva's letter was well before my time at the Towers and it seems slightly strange that you are harping back on it now. Anyway, I've dug out that particular edition and taken a look at the letter and the then OTS Team's reply. As you now have noticed the odious OTS Team have now disappeared — little old moi is here to stay. As for the monitor to telly transfer doobrie Anthony (Lemme interface somefing, pleeeeeease!) Clarke has promised that it should be lurking in the pages of Amtech this month, if it's not then there'll be trouble!
Yours threateningly Tony!
ST



GOLF BALLS FROM NEWSFIELD?

Dear Saffron
While walking on Wanton Heath Golf Course, which is near my house, I was fortunate enough to find a golf ball. However, this was no ordinary golf ball because printed on the side was 'Newsfield'. 'That's funny' I thought, 'I didn't know the junkies played golf'. However, my question was soon answered as five yards further up the seventh I found yet another Newsfield ball, so I concluded that the poor old junkies don't (Or rather can't) play golf. Any Comment? . . .
Michael Hill, Lower Kingswood, Surrey

Golf, hah!, that lot don't know what a golf ball is, the nearest they'll ever get to playing golf is kipper frying (Do what? —Ed). Anyway, the only one educated (So he tells us) enough to play golf is our eminent Publisher, Roger (No time to breathe, I'm LMing) Kean, but I'm sure he hasn't got 'Newsfield' embossed on his balls . . . Oh dear I'm wrong. Crumbly tells me he once played a round with golf balls, whatever that means!!
ST

EXCUSES, EXCUSES

Dear Saffron
What a lovely name! Very yellow!, writer now falls about with laughter as angered letters' editor brandishes her overworked brolly.

I wrote to you a few days ago concerning the fact that I had not received a prize from Amstrad Action (letters' editor now gets more threatening with her brolly), and challenging them to reply through your hallowed pages. Well now for the good news. I got the prize, but my challenge still stands and is now made more universal to every other magazine (including yourselves) to give a satisfactory reason to their readers why they have so much difficulty getting prizes to people. Everybody understands the main reason, which is of course that not all the software given as prizes has been released at the time of setting the competition, and due to the delays that software houses have between advertising and actual release (*Street Hawk* is a prime example, WHERE IS IT OCEAN?), but I feel that there is something that you're not telling us.

So please be honest, and tell us what's wrong. British Computers Users, of all types, are a very understanding lot (except at computer shows), and if it's painful for you to tell us what's wrong, whisper it to me, I won't tell anyone honest.
John Gigney, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 6JA PS Buy a Transformer, they're very relaxing!
PPS I found I was too late with the birthday greetings.

Okay I'll tell you the full story about comps.

Day one: Comps minion plays a really good game, phones up the company to see if they would be interested in setting up a competition.

Day two: Yes, they've got a great first prize and x copies of the game as runner up prizes. Send out one of our Competition contract forms as a firm agreement.

Day three: Write competition, and get Art to illustrate it.

Day four: Comp gets published in AMTIX! and entries come flooding in by the sackful.

Day five: Comp gets judged and the list of winners is posted off to the company concerned.

It really is, from there on, up to them to distribute the games or whatever and usually they are quite efficient.
ST

THE NEW LOGO AND GARGLING

Dear Saffron
I'd just like to start off with a little experiment for all the readers out there.

1) Take in a mouth full of water.
2) Stick your head back 90 degrees.
3) Poke your tongue out as far as possible.
4) Gargle, or try to.

Anyone who tried that will have some indication of my first impression of the new AMTIX! logo. In simple terms it's horrible. Whatever happened to the old logo with it's futuristic design and flash colouring? I bet Oli Frey spent all of one and a half minutes designing the new one.

That's my moan over and done with. Now, I was wondering could you help me with a little problem I have? For the past month or so I have been planning a text adventure on paper. It is going to be very complex: about two hundred, heavily described location; thirty or more computer-controlled characters; three player-controlled characters; magic. Because of this complexity I have a feeling that *Locomotive* BASIC is just not going to be good enough. Well, seeing as my birthday is just coming up, I should be getting a bit of money. With this money I intend buying another language. I had considered *C basic compiler*. Could you recommend something yourself?

I guess that now is the time everyone's been waiting for. Yes, it's CREEP TIME! (Hmm, twenty quid might prove useful). May I just say what a delightful name Saffron is: so ladylike, so delicate, so generous.

Well, I guess I'd better finish the letter off now. Oh, by the way, I'll be going to the Amstrad Show in Hammersmith on Saturday, October 4th (I just thought I'd add that to make the letter look longer. Oops, I'm doing the same here as well). Goodbye, live long, and prosper.
Mark Hooper, Portsmouth, Hants, PO3 6JY

Gurgle, gurgle, splutter, splutter. Well, actually I like the new logo and I'm not going to take any notice of your shortsighted opinions. If you think about it, it ties in with the other mag's logos, so NAH!. As for your adventure it sounds absolutely brilliant and I look forward to hearing more about it. It may be a good idea to get the new *GAC* which allows you to construct adventures in several parts, so you can make it absolutely huge!

Unfortunately, we won't be having a stand at the show, but we'll be there in force, so I'll look forward to seeing you!
ST

NOT MAN ENOUGH FOR A CHALLENGE

Dear Saffron
I am writing in to notify you of my high score on *TOMAHAWK*, 2045, and to ask why you have taken the bit in the voting form that deals with the high score? If you put it back it would save us lot having to write letters if we didn't want to enter the AMTIX! challenge.
David Hedges, Kent, ME9 7AP
PS We could just scribble the score at the bottom couldn't we?

Yes, of course you could David, love. Just because you've got a high score doesn't mean that you have to enter for the challenge, I'll put your score on the scoreboard anyway. Do remember that you can put your top twenty, OTS letters, and challenge form in one envelope because I'm the one who has to deal with them!
ST

MORE INFORMATION ON THIS GIZMO

Dear Saffron
In issue 10 a certain Taqi Hashmi implied that a gizmo could be purchased for a mere £22.00 which would convert humble Amstrad monitors into a television. He said this rather nonchalantly as though all Amstrad owners would obviously know where to buy one. I plead with you to look into this matter for me and fellow Amstrad owners, as I know your knowledge in these matters is infinitely more superior to mine, and if such a thing exists, which I very much doubt, could you please tell me how I could obtain one?

I also plead with you to tell me why my Oliver Frey Posters have not yet arrived after many months of waiting, I have eternal faith in AMTIX! the magazine of the future and suspect that it is not the staff's fault, but please look into the matter for me. Also when we find out that we have won a competition, do we have to send off for the prize or will it just turn up in the post?
Richard Kirkman, Kent, DA14 6JA

Technocrap Tony keeps saying it'll be through in a few days, but as yet we've heard nothing, but keep waiting . . .

What no posters? I'll check it out and hopefully by the time you read this they should be with you!
ST

Dear Saffron
I thought that I'd drop a line to you concerning several points raised in OTS. The first is about the changes. What can I say? The mag has greatly improved. At last Crumbly's boring user club page has gone. Also the 'orrible graph paper bits have gone. (As I suggested in arcana issue 9). The reviews are better now that everyone knows who is saying what about a game. Glad to see more colour in the mag. Makes it look more appealing. Even though I'm all for the changes there are still three minor niggles:

1) The logo. The new logo is fine apart from one thing. It's a bit normal. Add the metallic effect from the old one and it will be perfect.

2) Am-tech. I would prefer it if it was totally removed from AMTIX!, but the minorities have to be kept happy.(This should get a few complaints in). As I am a fairly reasonable person I don't mind if it stays. Just do more reviews on hardware like the light pen review in issue 1. Some suggestions are:- joysticks, disk drives and printers. Also Am-tech tips section where us humble readers can find out how to repair a broken straddles.

3) The daft Mick. Sean Masterson should be given more space. Cut out part of Am-tech and give the space to SM. The stingy little Irish ***** didn't even give me a prize for suggesting that he should give £20 worth of games for LOTM (issue 9 again).

Allan Price, Leeds, LS13 1DF

I think I like you Allan, you sound like a good chap! Hopefully, Am—tech should be becoming more 'user friendly' soon, meaning that everyone will be able to find something they like in it. Sean is a very busy sort of chap, and his allocated space varies depending on how many games into review — last month was a rather good one, don't ya think? As for the prize, not my fault!
ST

BACK NUMBERS!

Your chance to fill that gap in your life

AMTIX! is THE magazine for the discerning Amstrad owner, combining the best in games reviews and technical know how, coping with adventures and strategy, your problems and ours! You shouldn't miss out on this, but if you haven't been able to get hold of earlier issues of AMTIX! we do have some in stock — and after all, you wouldn't want any holes in your AMTIX! binder, would you? So order now!

No 1 November 1985

* Complete Guide to games I * Lightpens * Dun Darach Map * Pyjamarama Map * Everyone's a Wally Map * Lords of Midnight Map * CP/M * Tape to Disk Utilities

No 2 December 1985

* Complete Guide II * Fighting Fantasy * Alien 8 Map * Word Processing with Tasman * FORTH on the Amstrad

No 3 January 1986

* Gargoyle Games Profile * Knight Lore Map * Public Domain CP/M * Computer Art * Extension ROMs * RS232

No 4 February 1986

* Dynamite Dan map * The world of Infocom adventures * Amsoft visit * The first batch of results * Gremlin graphics, the journey, the people and the story * Introduction to seducational software * Preview of the The Music Processor.

No 5 March 1986

* Cauldron map * More competition winners * More educational software * the improved AMX Mouse * the Vortex expansion board.

No 6 April 1986

* Maps of Gunfright, Marsport and Three Weeks in Paradise * A review of Pyradev * The world of Lothlorien * A visit to the Ocean and Imagine software company * Readers awards * The Amtix! questionnaire * yet more competition winners.

No 7 May 1986

* Battle of the Chess Giants * The world of PSS * A transatlantic interview with Infocom (pt 1) * Reviews of Rainbird's Music System and the Melbourne Draw * Competition winners.

No 8 June 1986

* Maps of Shadowfire and Bounder (parts 1 and 2) * The concluding part of the Infocom interviews * Spotlight on Activision * A dissection of Artificial Intelligence * More competition winners.

No 9 July 1986

* Maps of Movie and Nomad * How to beef up your Joyce for £20! * A review of Laser Genius * Competition winners galore.

No 10 August 1986

* Maps of Heavy on the Magick and Cauldron 11 * A visit to Level 9 * Spoilt for Joyce including a review of Money Maker * Lots more competition winners.

No 11 September 1986

* Maps of Fairlight, Saboteur and Movie * The ultimate Joyce supplement including games reviews, a dust cover offer, typing tutorials and a chess comparison * Reviews of Promerge, a Silicon Disk Drive, a Miditrack and a Drumkit * Even more winners

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ON THE SPOT

SHUFFLED!

Dear Madam
Here is a copy of a letter sent to CRL, it is self explanatory, and may interest both you and your readers.

Dear Sir
In the first instance, I would like to thank your company for the speedy delivery of a solitary cassette - *AMSTRAD SHUFFLE*.

You are doubtless aware of the generally cool reception this game had at the hands of the reviewers, so I thought I would brighten your day by offering a few comments of my own.

The individual games, in our collective opinion, are very well presented. Admitted, the cards are on the small side, but then, so are proper Patience cards — a double pack left to me by my late father measures only one-and-one-half inches in length, and resides in a handsome walnut box.

I have transferred the whole program to disk, making a few small modifications on the way (of which more later), thus obviating the tiresome waiting time. It has been in use by either, or both, of us practically every day since. My sister prefers to get the cards out, but enjoys sitting at Henry (not Arnold, in our house), nevertheless. As for me, I never bothered to play Patience because of the effort of laying out the cards; it never seemed worth it. Now, I must have at least one game before retiring for the night.

The title screen is very well designed, and we like the stereo touch as the cards go from the letters left to right.

The modifications mentioned earlier. Sentences, unless they are titular, should always end with a full stop. A grammatical error has been corrected, namely, 'you're' (you are). As this occurs twice in the original tape, it cannot be a typing error. While 'thank you' is acceptable, so is 'thankyou', and looks better. Finally, 'Blackjack' is American, 'Pontoon' is British: I am British, so the game has been renamed throughout.

Thank you, Sir, for a most enjoyable cassette, which we heartily recommend.
William A Smith, Windsor, Berkshire

I was not involved with writing much of the *Shuffle* review, so on receiving your letter I decided to dig it out and load it up. I think I must agree with you in that it is a very playable game, well implemented and is generally good fun but I think the overall comment, which I wrote, still stands. In that it is a good game but I still can't see it selling in vast quantities. But thank you for your comments, and I would welcome any alternative reviews, from other readers, if you feel the urge!
ST

OI, YA BUNCH O' GITS!!!

Now listen here you gits
My nice client Mr Thompson has just received a letter from some creep called T C and another GIT called Jazza something or other. Anyway, in this letter there was a very nasty accusation that my client, that nice Mr Thompson, was something that you LIMEYS seem to have invented, ie a 'BOYO'. Now listen here, MY client WASN'T the ONE who went to GLAN-YR-AFAN. (I know the DUMP well). So shut it or I'll send the boys around to deliver some concrete fashion accessories, and take you swimming.

My client would like to inform you that HE is ALSO designing a NON EXISTENT program editor which will allow you to add bits and change bits. However, it isn't for *Ghost and Goblins*. It's for *Knight Rider* and *Scooby Doo*. He is overcome by problems, however, due to lack OF FINANCE and the fact that neither titles exist as yet.

Finally, my client is hoping to write a set of pokes that will turn that Amsoft Classic, oops I mean Chestnut, into a game. I am, of course, referring to *Bridge-It* (also popularly known as 'A load of utter B*****IT').
B Nasty, Port Talbot, SA12 8AA
PS Ooh! I bet Julian could just scratch my eyes out! Hang On- he's Welsh.
PPS (No! You can't hide it from ME, Kiddo!) He'll just hit me with his handbag. Mmmm, nice.
PPPS He can't be a REAL Welsh 'person', or he wouldn't have 'hair' like THAT.

Dear Readers — first a bit of background leading up to this ill founded letter. A while back we received a very sarky letter from this Mr Nasty (Too much of a scaredy cat to put his real name) which generally flung mere unfounded accusations around, mainly about our esteemed organ, the brilliant AMTIX!. Anyway, it was just too ridiculous to print, but now I'm just getting slightly peeved with his constant stream of jibes.

For your information, Mr Nancy — sorry, Nasty, Julian really is Welsh — he comes from Aberystwyth so nah!. What's wrong with spikey hair? I suppose you're one of those Wham! trendies who have their hair flat and streaked — makes me throw up, my hair is pink/purple and spikey and reeks of really strong girly spray (At the moment) And jolly nice it is too, I know, my mother told me. As for your reference to *Scooby Doo*, check your facts first, I saw it in mid August and thought it was excellent, and still do. It just goes to prove that it is Limeys like yourself, who serve no purpose at all, who add more utter crap to the industry which is already trailing enough manure as it is, thank you very much. Oh dear I can see Julian coming this way and he's not looking too happy . . .

Cae de geg, twpsyn fawr. What's the difference between you and a bucket of sick . . . the bucket. Anyway, I know what pobol cymraeg think of people who come from Port Talbot, especially Max Boyce, and I'm inclined to agree with them. JR

And, er, Mass thinks that the best thing for you to do is to drown yourself in a vat of boiling Port Talbot oil. Don't argue, he's from Italy, and has certain connections with the Mafia.

PS — I've just found out your name, Philip Thompson of Port Talbot. I think Mr Nasty suits you better. Come on readers — let's have some defence for AMTIX!

Yours with lots of amazingly condescending love
ST

IN DEFENCE OF OLD CRUMBLY

Dear Saffron
Having just read the October issue of AMTIX! re: *Is Crumbly wearing falsies?*, I think your Scandinavian friend is out of line.

I can tell you that there is nothing artificial about Malcolm Harding, in fact he is all man! With regard to his remark about being a 'real character', well!!, it's just too much, and let me tell you that he is the perfect gent, full of wit and charm. In fact I think he is wonderful.

With regard to his 'sexist' comments about page three girlies (I like them blonde and eat them with whipped cream), may I say it takes a real man to handle us blondes if you want 'girlies' then go and buy the Sun or perhaps Fiesta, and let's just leave AMTIX! the way it is, and you know where you can stick your whipped cream!
Honey Basset, Shrewsbury

Thank you Honey (What a yummy name), I knew someone would stick up for dear old Malcolm. I'm glad to know there's nothing false about Malcolm, though I doubt if I'll ever find out. He's just a bit misunderstood. If it takes a 'real man' to look after 'us blondes' then what does it take to look after us pink spikey people? By the way how do you know dear old Crumbly? We are all intrigued at AMTIX! Towers.
ST

UP WITH MALCOLM!

Dear Saffy
I am the founder member of the **Malcolm Harding Fan Club**. For the mere sum of £2 million pounds in user tenners (Yes, we are a non profitable organisation) you will receive a fabulous two page black and white newsletter photocopied so you can't see anything on it, and you'll need to buy another. You'll also receive a rather jolly but ever so useless 'I suck my feet' sticker. Last and most definitely least, you'll receive a fabulous giant poster of those wonderful eyebrows (one size fits all). So, there you have it; the offer of a lifetime, don't delay — join today.
Richard Burton, St. Keverne

Er, um, yes— fine. I think the best I can do for you to do is to go and see a specialist, luvvie.
ST

UNDER DOWN UNDER

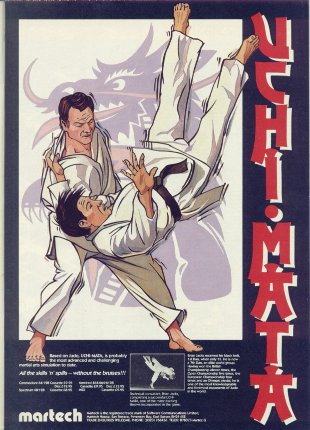
Dear Saffron
I have only bought two of your magazines and they are great. There is only one problem, I live in Tasmania, (You know that blotch on the map under Australia). When I get the magazine there is no time to enter the competitions. The prices are all in pounds and we use dollars so it is hard to work out how much money I have to send for orders, etc. Is there anything I can do?
Shane Porter, Beaconsfield, Tasmania

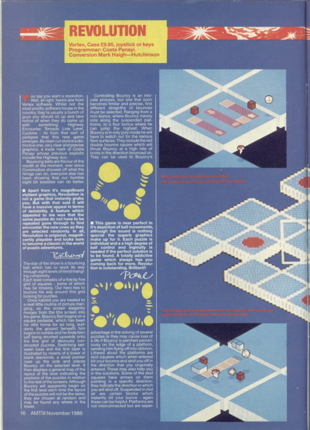
Well, we do have seem to have spread our wings. Anyway, Shane, you could try getting an air mail subscription if you want to; write to Denise Roberts, our subscription queen, then she'll post on some details — I think it costs about £33.00 per year. As for changing your money any bank should be able to help you out, if they don't tell me, and I'll brolly the lot of them. Afraid nI can't offer an answer to your competition problem. Sorry.
Yours helpfully
ST

BYE, BYE AND TA TA FOR NOW

Right, that's you lot for this month. I want a pile of letters for Christmas for my special OTS, and as a special treat for you all if you want a personal reply and autographs from the team then include a stamped addressed envelope and I'll do my best.

Send your views on games, prices, vegetables, our reviews, earings, features and especially a recipe for an AMTIX! Christmas pudding, the best one I'll print in the special, to:
Saffron (Yum, yum) Trevaskis, AMTIX! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire. SY8 1DB.


UCHI-MATA
Based on Judo, UCHI-MATA, is probably the most advanced and challenging martial arts simulation to date.
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Technical consultant, Brian Jacks, completing a successful UCHI-MATA, one of the many exciting throws incorporated in the game.
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REVOLUTION

Vortex, Cass £9.95, joystick or keys
Programmer: Costa Panayi.
Conversion Mark Haigh—Hutchinson

You say you want a revolution. Well, all right, here's one from Vortex software. Whilst not the most prolific software house in the country, they're usually a bunch of guys you should sit up and take notice of when they do come up with something. Highway Encounter, Tornado Low Level, Cyclone - its from that sort of pedigree that this new game emerges. Its clean cut style is a distinctive one, very clear and precise graphics, a trade mark of Costa Panayi whose previous exploits include the Highway duo.

Bouncing balls are flavour of the month at the moment, ever since Commodore showed off what the Amiga can do, everyone else has been showing that our humble eight bit beasties can do better.

■ **Apart from it's magnificent stylised graphics, Revolution is not a game that instantly grabs you. But with that said it will have a massive appeal in terms of lastability. A feature which appealed to me was that the same puzzles do not have to be repeated gone through to find encounter the new ones as they are selected randomly. In all, Revolution is origional, magnificently playable and looks sure to become a classic in the world of puzzle adventures.**

Richard

The star of the show is a bouncing ball which has to work its way through eight levels of mind mangling complexity.

Each level consists of a five by five grid of squares - some of which may be missing. Our hero has to bounce his way around this grid looking for puzzles.

Once loaded you are treated to a neat little routine of picture mangling, as the screen elegantly merges from the title screen into the game. Bouncy Ball begins on a square pedastal, which has been his little home for so long, suddenly the ground beneath him begins to rumble and he finds himself being shunted upwards onto the first grid of deviously constructed puzzles. Switching between base and the first layer is illustrated by means of a tower of blank diamonds, a small pointer rises up the side and places Bouncy on the selected level. It then displays a general map of the layout of the level indicating the postions of the puzzles in relation to the rest of the screens. Although Bouncy will apparently begin on the first level each time the layout of the puzzles will not be the same, they are chosen at random and may be found any where in the tower.

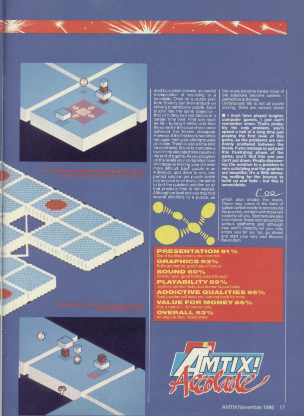
Controlling Bouncy is an intricate process, but one that soon becomes fimilar and precise, first different stregnths of bounces must be selected. Ranging from a non-bonce, where Bouncy merely rolls along the suspended platfroms, to a four bonce where he can jump the highest. When Bouncy is in rolly poly mode he will have to watch out for the various floor surfaces. They include the red double bounce square which will thrust Bouncy at a high rate of knots in the direction bounced on. They can be used to Bouncy's advantage in the solving of several puzzles or they may cause loss of a life if Bouncy is perched percariously on the edge of a platform, sending him flying off into oblivion. Littered about the platforms are skid squares which when entered kill your bounce and skid you off in the direction that you origonally entered. These may also help you in the solutions. Some of the skid squares have arrows on them pointing in a specific direction; they indicate the direction in which you will skid off. Suspended in mid air are certain blocks which instantly kill your bonce - again these can be helpful. Platforms are not interconnected but are seper-

■ **This game is near perfect in it's depiction of ball movements, although the sound is nothing special the superb graphics make up for it. Each puzzle is individual and a a high degree of ball control and inginuity is needed if the perfect solution is to be found. A totally addictive game which always has you coming back for more. Revolution is outstanding. Brilliant!!**

Paul

Skid pads and double bounce here, the solution is all about precision bouncing.

The deadly fuzz ball between the two blocks will make any failure fatal here. Simple once you know how.



The problem we enjoyed most here at Amtix towers. It looks tricky but the solution is dead neat.

The skid block is the clue to the solution of this awkward looking screen.

ated by a small crevass, so careful manipulation of bouncing is a necessity. Once on a puzzle platform Bouncy can then embark on solving a particualar puzzle. Each puzzle has the same objective - that of hitting two red blocks in a certain time limit. First one must be hit - turning it white, and then the same for the second one, once achieved the blocks dissapear. However, if the first block becomes red again then your attempts were all in vain. There is also a time limit for each level, failure to complete a level in the allocated time results in the end of a game. As you progress up the levels your completion time limit lessens making your life even more difficult. Each puzzle is an individual, and there is only one perfect solution per puzzle which can be used on all levels, the aim is to find the quickest solution so all that precious time is not wasted. Although on level one you may find several solutions to a puzzle, as the levels become harder most of the solutions become useless - perfection is the key.

Unfortunatly life is not all puzzle solving, there are various aliens which also inhabit the levels. These may come in the form of spikers which reside in and around the puzzles, contact with these will instantly kill you. Spinners are also to be found, these wizz around the various platforms and although they won't instantly kill you, may knock you for six. So, go ahead and start your very own Bouncy Revolution.

■ I must have played tougher computer games, I just can't remember when. That's probably the only problem, you'll spend a hell of a long time just playing the first level of this game, as the problems are randomly scattered between the levels. If you manage to get past this frustrating phase of the game, you'll find this one you can't put down. Finally discovering the solution to a problem is very satisfying and the graphics are beautiful. It's a little annoying waiting for the bounce to build up and fade - but this is unavoidable.

Lee

PRESENTATION 91%
Good loading screen, nice controls.

GRAPHICS 93%
Brillo animation, good use of colour.

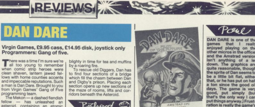
SOUND 60%
Wot no tune, good boing sound though

PLAYABILITY 89%
Joystick control tricky, but screen layout helps

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 95%
Neat puzzles will keep you coming back for more

VALUE FOR MONEY 85%
Hm, a tenner — bit pricey lads.

OVERALL 93%
An original idea, nicely done.



DAN DARE

Virgin Games, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick only
Programmers: Gang of five.

There was a time I'm sure we're all too young to remember when comic strip heroes were clean shaven, lantern jawed fellows with home counties accents and impeccable reputations. Such a man is Dan Dare. Brought to you from Virgin Games' Gang of Five programming team.

The Mekon — a dashed fiendish fellow — has unleashed an asteroid, containing an atomic bomb, on collision course with the earth. The asteroid will obviously cause a lot of grief unless the Earth gives in to the dashed Mekon's demands: nothing less than the subjugation of all the Earth's people to this nasty green person's evil will. Well, better green than dead I always say, but, there is just one hope — can Dan jump into his trusty space ship Anastasia and destroy the asteroid.

And so Dan, Digby and the plucky Prof. Peabody set off for the Asteroid. But Dan and Digby are ambushed as soon as they set foot on the asteroid. But Digby, Dan's fearless fat friend holds them off while Dan makes good his escape.

The player controls Dan as he trudges around the asteroid blowing up aggressive wall lights and floating badies known as 'treens' — a sort of hyperactive portaloo with a persecution complex. Dan must rescue Digby, trigger the self destruct mechanism to blow up the asteroid to save the Earth. Around about this point, our hero's brain makes it into first gear 'if the asteroid blows up, don't I go with it?' and so starts the search for the Mekon's spaceship which old Mek has left parked on a double yellow, and then, blast off and back to blighty in time for tea and muffins by a roaring fire.

To rescue old Diggers, Dan has to find four sections of a bridge which fill the chasm between Dan and Digby's prison. Placing each section opens up new sections of the maze of rooms, lifts and corridors beneath the Asteroid.

Richard — CRITICISM

Oh, wizzo chaps, my fave boys own hero is in his very own game. However, he seems to have put on a hell of a lot weight, porky pixel mode gives Dan his very own beer gut — Amaaaazing!. Gameplay is also a bit on the fatty side, with a nasty element of frustration seaping in at the edges, especially when that utter buzzard, Mekon, captures you and locks you up in his dungeon, not a nice thing to happen. All things considered it's not such a bad game, but doesn't seem to involve DAN DARE to the full, apart from the basic scenario, basically a normal shoot 'em up come adventure that might be a hit with all you mega mappers.

If Dan hits a treen, then he loses one of his six lives and ends up in chokey — but bars cannot hold our hero, and soon he is out and about making trouble for the treens. A similar fate awaits him by falling or by getting shot more often than is really good for him.

This game is all about accurate use of the joystick to get from ledge to ledge. Beware of wanton destruction, if some of the nasties are destroyed in the wrong position, the wreckage prevents Dan from jumping. Later on, it's a matter of mapping, as a seemingly endless maze of lifts and screens confronts our Dan. Naturally, with the asteroid plunging ever earthwards, there is a time limit. When the globe at the bottom of the screen turns green, the Mekon is triumphant and the Earth is doomed

Lee — CRITICISM

Not a terribly original sort of game, but the presentation is really nice. All the cartoon style little windows popping up with jolly messages from the Mekon make the game amusing to play. But you'll soon hardly notice all this as you zip round the maze against the clock. It's got good 'learnability': once you've done a section once, it's very quick to do it again. There's a nice balance between frustration and speed all topped off with great graphics. The puzzle has been planned well so that there's a lot of toing and froeing to make the maze seem really huge, and there are plenty of red herrings and dead ends so the solution isn't obvious.

Paul — CRITICISM

DAN DARE is one of the games that I really enjoyed playing on the other micros in the office, and the Amstrad version isn't anything of a let down. The graphics are quite reasonable, though the sprite of Dan seems to be a little bit flat, either that, or he has put on half a ton since the good ol' days. The game is very good, put simply (but that's the only way I can put things anyway.) Frustration is really the game's main let down, 'cos when you spend ages playing, and get really near to the end and then go and end the game; aarrgghh! DAN DARE is really an enjoyable game, and one that is well worth a good play or three. Maybe even worth buying. . . .

PRESENTATION 82%
Jolly inlay and nice cartoon style captions

GRAPHICS 78%
Colourful crisp graphics.

SOUND 62%
Rather uninspired FX, no tune.

PLAYABILITY 80%
Simple controls, easy to get the hang of.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 80%
Well worth getting to the end.

VALUE FOR MONEY 76%
A tenner is a bit steep.

OVERALL 80%
Captures the spirit of the cartoon nicely.

Dan needs more bits to rescue Digby, quick, before the world turns green!

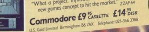




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TRIVIAL PURSUIT

Domark, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys
Programmers: Oxford Digital Enterprises

There must be very few people in the Galaxy who have not played or at least heard of *Trivial Pursuit*, a legendary board game of astonishing brain power. This game has now been faithfully converted to our beloved Amstrads courtesy of those ever—so—nice chaps down at Domark. The object of the game is to answer a sufficient number of questions, selected from six categories consisting of Art, Literature, Science, Geography, Sport, Leisure, Entertainment, and History. If a question is answered correctly on a category HQ square,a subject wedge is awarded. When you have six wedges you must then head for the hub at the centre of the board and answer a final question to finish the game.

On loading the screen fills with option menus; the main one selects options concerned with game play, consisting of Number of players, Start game, Timer on, Sound effects on or off, Load new questions and Analysis of the current scores. There is also a option to select whether T P is awake or asleep. T P is Mr Trivial Pursuit, a mascot that has been adopted to act as question master and dart thrower. When you enter the game board he stands at the bottom right hand side with dart in hand. Putting ol' T P to sleep will speed up the game, but you will lose a lot of the character of the game.

The first thing to do is to enter the player's name — there can be six in all, then move the highlight bar to the Start game. You will find yourself on the playing board with dear old T P waiting for you. To begin the game press fire and T P will throw his trusty dart towards the numbers which are located around the board. When a number has been selected several segments will flash indicating the possible moves you can make. Move your counter onto the desired segment and press fire. T P will then jump off his platform and waddle over to the question room, which is decorated with bookcases, a fireplace and a grandfather clock which will chime the hours.

Players can join or leave the game at any point, there is even a very useful pause function, where a player can sit out a few rounds while they make the tea, go down to the sandwich bar or write a scathing comment about *Knight Rider*. There is a timer which can be set from five seconds to nine minutes (for the very patient) — you have to splutter out the answer before the times up; ten seconds is usually just about right.

Several forms of questions can be asked in this room. The standard text question, a graphical question which involves T P pulling down a small projection screen upon which a drawing will be displayed, and a music question played through T P's little stereo complete with flashing LED's to boot! Each question is displayed at the top of the screen pressing fire will reveal the answer, it is then up to your honesty, and that of your fellow players, to say whether you answered the question correctly (additional rule, if one player is dishonest then hit him over the head with a wet kipper). If you have answered a wedge question correctly then a little ditty will be played announcing the fact.

TP's question screen, here's a visual question.

An analysis screen, see which type of question you're weak on.

The questions are indeed *very* trivial. Anything from guessing the animal from a rather blotchy piccy of its detritis to recognising Beethoven backwards.

Having returned to the board screen it is possible to exit, view your score and that of any other player and also see how you or they they have been faring on the certain topics. When all six wedges have been collected you must then make your way to the

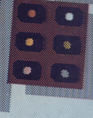
■ **At last, Domark (with a little bit of help from ODE) seem to have come up with a decent game. However, I've never been much of a one for the use of the old grey matter but this is all a trivia game should be, interesting, varied and most important of all, fun. Everything has been well defined, the graphics compliment the game's atmosphere very well and Mr T P's sarcastic comments are really jolly witty, what a horrid little person! If you're looking for a trivia game then I have no hesitation in pointing you in the direction of** Trivial Pursuit **as it is the most competent and professional trivia game on the market.**

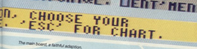
Richard

■ **A rather jovial game is old *Trivial Pursuit* and I'm sure hours of fun is to be had from it for all you intellectual types. It's a shame, though, that Domark didn't incorporate a 'write your own questions' option as once the game has been played a few times most of the questions become somewhat familiar. Luckily for us more question blocks can be obtained from Domark. The graphics and colour are very neat but unfortunately some of the tunes played, more often than not, don't sound much like what they are supposed to. On the whole one of the best trivia games around — and it's very enlightening.**

Paul

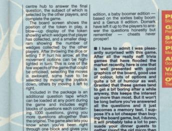








The main board, a faithful adaption.



centre hub to answer the final question, the subject of which is selected by the other players, and complete the game.

The board screen shows the position of the token in play, a blow—up display of the token showing which wedges that player has collected, and a smaller diagram showing the number of wedges collected by the other players. After throwing the dice or letting T P hurl his arrow, all the movement options can be highlighted in turn. This is one of the few aspects of the game that could be criticised, selecting the moves is awkward, some have to be selected by moving the joystick down, others by moving it left to right.

Included in the package is an additional question tape which can be loaded at any point during the game and includes eight blocks of questions each containing 1000 questions, giving you more questions altogether than the original. The game also lets you know when you've been right through one block and gives you the opportunity to load a further block. Domark also promise the availability of further question tapes based on the further board games including a young players edition, a baby boomer edition — based on the sixties baby boom and a Genus II edition. Domark have left it up to the players to answer the questions honestly but remember — cheats never prosper!

■ **I have to admit I was pleasantly surprised with this game. After all the really naff trivia games that have flooded the market recently, here is one that is well presented with good graphics of the board, good use of colour, lots of options and quite a bit of humour as well. Granted that these games tend to get a bit boring after a while anyway, this keeps the interest up more than most. But it won't be long before you've answered all the questions and it just becomes a memory test. I suppose it's a lot cheaper than buying the board game, but, I dunno, it will probably take a lot to persuade your dinner guests to gather round the old micro then if you just plonked a board game in front of them.**

Lee

PRESENTATION 94%
Slick packaging, nice use of menus, good options.

GRAPHICS 90%
Pretty and useful.

SOUND 85%
Some of the sound questions were impossible.

PLAYABILITY 93%
Menus made things easy, but choosing move a little awkward.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 89%
Good fun for a group of players.

VALUE FOR MONEY 89%
Hours of fun for a tenner.

OVERALL 91%
The best of the trivia bunch.



Let the good times roll!

BOBBY BEARING



Spectrum/Commodore 64/Amstrad

POPEYE

Piranha, cass £7.95

Yuk yuk yuk, well here I is guys and goyles on me very own computer game. Olive Oyl's my goyle, and I intends to keep it that way. But I got to look out for that lump of lard ol' Bluto who's tryin' to woe ma goyl and tyrn meself into a squished jelly.

Popeye has to prove his devotion to every sea farers favourite femme fatale Olive Oyl. A total of 25 hearts are scattered around fifteen screens. Our over-developed hero must collect these and deliver them to the 'goyle of me dreams'. Being naturally fickle, all the hearts must be collected against a time limit, or Olive will fall for the fairly basic seduction technique, flattening all rivals in sight, of bad ol' Bluto. Bluto, always a realist about his good looks, recognises that he'll never get to grips with the goyle unless he can wipe out the competition. With a face like his, this means all eligible males within a nine mile radius.

Popeye can carry eight objects around with him to aid his lovers quest. The trouble is that a lot of the hearts are behind locked doors and on top of seemingly inaccessible roofs.

The key to getting in to this game is realising that not only do you have the standard two dimensions of most run-of-the-mill arcade adventures, you also have three 'planes' or layers. The meanies, like Bluto, vultures, witches and so forth will move in one of the layers, and all the various objects and scenery will block one or several of these layers.

Popeye has four controls, left and right, up and down. The up and down controls are complex. The up command will turn popeye's back to you, and then further presses will make popeye move back, and when he reaches the back plane, he will jump down if possible. The process works in reverse with the down key. Just to further complicate matters, the up and down keys also control such things as climbing up and down ropes and jumping up to grab various objects.

Although there are only a few screens, there is a great deal of toeing and froeing involved. Keys must be picked up, doors opened, and you'll find yourself jumping on and off the local flying saucer with monotonous regularity. Spinach is a vital commodity. If our musclebound meathead takes a tumble from any of the local meanies, a can of the stuff is administered to the famous bum chin, up he gets, dusts himself off, starts all over again. There are plenty of tins of spinach lying around, but, the more you pick up, the fewer objects you can carry. This means that you'll have to nip back to the lady love to offload your collected hearts, wasting precious time.

Popeye and all the meanies you meet are some of the biggest sprites you'll find around. Nearly half the screen size in height, they are all animated as they patrol their chosen level, bent on our man's demise.

Should Popeye manage to round up all 25 hearts, not only does he earn Olive's undying gratitude, but also a bonus based on the total amount of time taken.

Lee — CRITICISM

Five minutes into this game I was all ready to throw in the towel and admit defeat, but with a little perseverence, you'll discover a rattling good game under this. The controls are nasty, unresponsive and finnickerty. But once you're used to them and the 'layered' concept, you'll really get into it. The large, colourful and nicely animated sprites are really neat. The puzzles are tricky, but once cracked, they stay that way. Some of the effects, like the human cannonball, are nicely done. A little slow getting converted from the Speccy original, but well worth the wait.

Richard — CRITICISM

POPEYE didn't immediately appeal to me mainly due to the slightly naff graphics which appear a poor adaptation of the Spectrum originals. However, once you forget about them there is a game, which is great fun to play, just waiting to be unleashed. The puzzles may take a bit of getting into but once in, you're hooked and you have that feeling that you must complete this game. Fans of Popeye will love it, featuring all their favourite characters including Olive, Bluto and the Hag. Piranha seem to have a winner on their hands and although not a megagame it's going to prove popular.

Paul — CRITICISM

I remember this game on the Spectrum about a year and a half ago and what a brilliant game it was too. Unfortunately it seems to have lost all of its superb graphical qualities during the conversion onto the Arnold. POPEYE'S other main failing is its dire control, on screen response to the keyboard or joystick, is so slow it makes playing the game quite painful. The graphics are extremely blocky and they move around the screen abyssmally. The sound on the other hand is quite pleasant. There are some nice spot effects and the tune is also quite good.

PRESENTATION 65%
Well put together, good use of layout.

GRAPHICS 67%
A bit blocky and slow, but big and colourful.

SOUND 70%
Good tune, nice spot FX.

PLAYABILITY 45%
Slow controls, tricky to get used to.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 75%
The problems keep you coming back for more.

VALUE FOR MONEY 75%
A pretty decent price. . . .

OVERALL 72%
. . . for a pretty decent product.



COLOSSUS 4 BRIDGE

CDS Software £11.95 cass, £14.95 disk

There are probably two good reasons why Bridge isn't the popular card game it might be: you need to get three of your mates together for a couple of hours to play a game, and it takes a long time to learn how to play it well. This package from CDS tries to get round both these problems.

Firstly, the package includes the book Begin Bridge which gives a full introduction to the rules, conventions and scoring. Second, a bridge tutor is provided which will hold your hand through ten hands demonstrating various important points, and lastly, the main game itself which will allow you to take one of the four hands and play through a game or two. Thus armed, you may feel confident enough to venture in to the social world of the bridge circuit confident that you wont make a total fool of yourself.

The Bridge Tutor program is a BASIC program which takes you through the play of ten hands. At all stages, the computer will only allow you to make one response — it simply bleeps at you. This can obviously be somewhat irritating. In many positions in bridge, a number of cards are equally valid, and the game cannot be prompted to lay a card for you. But, as a teaching aid, it works. After the bidding and play of each hand, a short explanation of the why and the wherefor is given before you proceed onto the next hand.

Having acquitted yourself on the tuition section, it's on to the meat of the program. The cards are dealt out, and your hand displayed sorted by suit and value. The full range of bids is available, including doubling; this is the process where one side doubles the amount of penalties or bonuses scored. After three players in succession have not made a bid, the bidding ends. The program then gives the option of rebidding the hand, it can be interesting to see the result of other bids. The computer always bids precisely to the Acol system, so the outcome of bidding will be the same if the player makes the same responses on a given hand.

Then play moves on to the play of the hand. The screen shows a bridge table, and displays the player's hand and the dummy hand. The screen also displays the contract, the number of tricks won by each side so far and the cards played in the last trick.

There are a large number of extra commands here to help play. Usually it is going to be fairly obvious which card you want to play, so the computer helps you. Pressing return will follow suit with your lowest card, pressing a suit key will play the lowest card of that suit. It is also possible to recap the bids played, and even abandon the current hand in play.

After the hand is finished, a scorecard is shown showing points above and below the line. The hand can then be replayed if the player is unhappy with their performance, or another hand can be dealt. A game in progress can be saved to tape or disc at any time, or a specific hand can be entered for problem solving. The number of honour points and distribution of South's hand can be entered to allow the player to practice certain types of play.

Lee — CRITICISM

One of the real problems about playing bridge is finding three other players of similar standard to play it with. Hopefully, this sort of program should encourage a few more people to take up the game. This is a useful package for beginner and experienced player alike. The tutor is a bit user hostile, but the main guts of the program is what its all about. This is well presented with lots of options. The only glaring criticism is the abandon options which are not error trapped — press them once and that's it, kablewy! The opponents play a reasonable game, and will normally not make too many mistakes, despite this, most experienced players will find themselves winning most of the rubbers.

Richard — CRITICISM

Not knowing the first thing about bridge, I've got hauled in to do the duffer's comment. Well, I think there might be something to this game. I didn't understand too much of what was going on from my skim through the book and the program's instructions, but I reckon it might be possible to get to grips with it all using Colossus if I had a few days to spare. If you've ever thought about trying the game, this could be the place to start.

Paul — CRITICISM

CP software were one of the first companies to give us a bridge program for the Ammy and suffered from the problem of alienating any would-be players whose only sin was having little knowledge of just what all the argy bargy' agot was all about. CDS's COLOSSUS 4 BRIDGE is a program with the same standards as the popular Chess games of the same prefix and will play a reasonable game. The exciting thing about it though is the way in which learners are catered for. The crux of good bridge lies in the bidding and the accompanying book covers this in an easy and friendly manner. The tutor program is a little too strict — but does tend to teach lessons that do stick. The main program runs separately to this and gives a good game for beginner and experienced player alike. If you want to learn bridge then this program will help the student instead of the sometimes intimidating way some players will try to teach you.

PRESENTATION 93%
Clear options, lots of functions.

GRAPHICS 73%
Functional rather than decorative.

SOUND 27%
Bridge should be played in silence after all.

PLAYABILITY 73%
Even the novice can get in to it.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 60%
Depends how much you like playing bridge.

VALUE FOR MONEY 65%
A shade pricey, but you get a free book.

OVERALL 75%
The best bridge player on the market.

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NEXOR

Design Design, £8.95 cass, £13.95 disk

Oh dear, once again someone is trying to take over the galaxy for no very good reason. This time it's the dear old Andromedans. I'm sure they're misunderstood, it's their society and the environment (all that green slime can't help).

Anyway, the end product of all this juvenile delinquency is the usual bloody inter-stellar war fought over huge distances, with unimaginable numbers of ships and casualties too hideous to contemplate. But eventually, the Andromedans have been pushed back to their last outpost in our galaxy in Orion, supplied from Andromeda by a hyperspace link. It is this link that must be broken for peace to reign once more and people can get on with their everyday man-about-the-galaxy sort of tasks.

Richard — CRITICISM

This is slightly, no in fact it is remarkably, similar to BATMAN, mainly in it's style, playability, and appearance. The only thing which doesn't complete the package is the sound which is restricted to a few mediocre squeaks. Maybe the company should be called Revamp Revamp rather than Design Design as this certainly isn't original. Okay, so main gripe over. To be fair this is a jolly arcade adventure, that has some rather devious puzzles in it. Sorry, I'm going to gripe again, unfortunately another let down is that NEXOR plays sluggishly — especially when there's a lot of animation taking place, but apart from all that it still provides an interesting challenge.

The weapon to do this is called NEMISIS, but since someone had already got an arcade game called that, they had to think of a different name. And so they came up with Nemisis EXperimental Operational Research — *Nexor* for short.

But do you think the jolly old Andromedans were going to sit around Orion whilst the *Nexor* project reached completion and thus sealed their doom — were they by heck! Nope, they launched a surprise attack on the planet where the device was being put together.

So, with the Andromedans even now closing on the planet, one man must try to pick up all the bits of the Nemisis device, pausing only to scoop up the blueprints and fix the Matter Transfer Beam which suffered a direct hit from the Andromedans, and then do the heroic thing — run for his life.

What this all amounts to is a good old 3D isometric adventure. Loads of screens all packed with puzzles to be solved. All our old favourites are there, crumbling platforms, conveyor belts, deadly barriers. One object can be picked up at a time, but the objects can't be carried out of rooms. These objects, in the time honoured way, must be stacked on one another and generally shoved around the place to allow doors to be reached, baddies avoided and barriers surmounted.

Paul — CRITICISM

Not one of the most inspiring games I've ever played, but nevertheless, it's just one of those I couldn't help having a go at. The graphics are neat and rather methodical, with nearly everything being comprised of squares, but the sound is a let down. Whirr, whirr, bleep, plod, tap and that's it. However, my initial eagerness to play was given a sharp kick up the butt once I had settled into it. There are simply a hell of a lot screens, most of which I hadn't a clue how to get into, and gave up or died trying. Mind you I'm not really one for plodding, searching games so for all you patient, determined types, this could be one for you.

The graphics are a riot with bright being the operative word. This is one to play with the sunglasses on. All screens make full use of mode 1 colours.

Most exits are clearly marked (doors) but on some screens, the room extends beyond the boundaries of the screen you are on, so it's a question of trying to nut the walls and see if any of them give.

Until a certain amount of time elapses or the first life is lost — there are eight to start with — things are fairly easy, but once death occurs due to static nasties, the place really comes alive with all sorts of cute animated bods running around the place hellbent on your destruction. Fortunately, most of them run around randomly, or in fixed patterns — none make a beeline for you — and most can be fairly easily avoided.

Lee — CRITICISM

Comparisons are bound to be made between this game and Ocean's *Batman*. I'm afraid this comes out second best as far as I'm concerned. It's colourful, it's big, and there are lots more levels, but in the end, there's not a lot that's new here. Come on lads, isn't it time we got out of this rut? Or are we to be treated to endless permutations of leaping, walking, picking up games. Sorry, I recognise this is a nice bit of programming, but it left me cold.

The whole thing is against a time limit of three hours, which seems a lot, but isn't when you look at the number of rooms crammed in here.

A tricky room for our hero in the depths of the complex.

PRESENTATION 69%
No tune, short on instructions.

GRAPHICS 76%
Colourful with nice animation.

SOUND 47%
Not much.

PLAYABILITY 62%
Some tough screens.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 54%
But you'll want to try and solve them.

VALUE FOR MONEY 59%
A lot of screens for your money.

OVERALL 63%
Nothing new, but 3D addicts will enjoy it.

DEACTIVATORS

Ariolasoft cass £8.95, disk £14.95
Designers: Tigress



Our little hero with a smoking bomb and a large baddy bearing down.

Being the head of security at the local hi-tech office block is no easy number. There I was, feet up on the video console, all the monitors tuned in to the local T V networks/satellite stations, a large enough supply of my favourite brew to see me safely through the night and my entire set of Judge Dredd backnumbers by my elbow, looking forward to a very comfortable night, when suddenly just about every alarm in the building went off.

Lee — CRITICISM

It's very easy for the reviewers palette to become jaded. Satiated on an endless diet of shoot em ups and arcade adventures, he becomes bitter and introverted. So it was nice to see something a little different here. The controls are a little tricky, and the game is *very* difficult, but I really enjoyed playing it. Obviously it is irritating that just one slip means you've got to start all over again, but, once a level is solved, it stays solved, and some of the little tricks needed to solve it are very neat. I also liked the effect where the whole screen rocks violently when a bomb goes off.

As I started stabbing buttons on the console, bringing up the views of the rooms in the office block, the awful truth started to dawn on me. Whilst I'd been catching up on the fifteenth re-run of Eastenders, some bunch of terrorists had decided that this place was about to do firework impressions. There were bombs all over the place. So, no problem, I punched up the code of one of the security droids. 'Hey, Henry, there are a couple of bombs around the place, d'ye think you can handle it — I'd handle it myself, but I'm a little busy right now.' I don't know where Henry had learnt that cold stare from, but he used it to good effect now. He just looked at me through the closed circuit camera with a look that summed up all the contempt those logic circuits held for me.

I soon sussed the problem. The main computer room looked like someone was heavily into reprogramming — with an axe. Well, there was no doubt in my mind what to do next; this was a job for the *Deactivators*; well, you didn't expect me to go in there, I might get hurt.

The deactivators are a bunch of droids which move around under security's control. These guys have got to put the computer back in working order and get the bombs out before they go off. The game takes the form of a logical puzzle; in each of the five office blocks to be cleared, there are only a couple of solutions. Every time a piece of circuit board is put in the computer, new sections of the game open up, allowing more circuit boards to be collected, or bombs picked up. Each of the bombs is set to go off at a certain time; this process is speeded up if

Richard — CRITICISM

This sort of game makes a nice change, clear uncomplicated graphics, an effective little tune and a unique gaming concept. The idea of two rooms being displayed at once appeals to my taste, especially when they are inverted and you view that part of the game upside down. Lobbing the bombs around needs a bit of precision but is made easier by the elevation counter which provides a useful indication of your throwing direction. I had doubted if Ariolasoft could come up with a good product, but they have proved me wrong this time.

Paul — CRITICISM

This game shows what rewards can be made from a little serious application of winning ideas. The graphics are clean and faultless, with what seems to be some clever mode splitting, to give high resolution graphics and four colours on screen. The sound is well used — the tune is catchy and the sound effects are effective. Visually, ideas are well used so that if you prefer to listen to the tune whilst playing, the lack of any sound effects is catered for by the whole screen shaking if a bomb goes off in a different location. The puzzles are tricky and only time or some accurate mapping will ensure progress.

the bomb is thrown around. Throwing bombs is a tricky but necessary business. Many of the rooms don't have doorways between them, and the bombs and circuit boards must be thrown through windows between the rooms. Some throws are real precision jobs where the bomb must be thrown so that it goes straight through a room and out the other side.

Ha, easy so far you think. But the old renegade droids have to be dealt with as well. These will chase the nearest deactivator and attempt to beat the hell out of him. There are two solutions to these guys, just keep running away or lure them to their doom by getting them to follow the deactivator. After a certain number of falls between floors, some of these guys will expire; some are made of sterner stuff than others.

Still too easy? OK, then, well, some of the rooms are on their side or up side down, and gravity also varies between the rooms, affecting the way bombs and circuit boards behave. And, oh yes, any contact between circuit boards and bombs and kerblewy! When a bomb goes off, it takes everything else with it, the room, droids, baddies, everything. And after all this, the really masochistic can set the expert level of difficulty to speed things up.

PRESENTATION 80%
Clean and simple with no frills.

GRAPHICS 88%
Nicely drawn, with a good perspective effect.

SOUND 82%
Shame the tune and fx can't be on at the same time.

PLAYABILITY 70%
A tricky game that may totally befuddle some.....

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 75%
. . . .But others will keep at it.

VALUE FOR MONEY 78% A good few hours puzzling here.

OVERALL 81%
A strange game you'll either love or hate.

KNIGHT RIDER

Ocean, £8.95 cass, joystick and keys

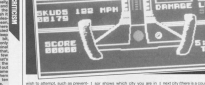
Michael Knight, Mr Macho and allround do-gooder, has been assigned yet another perilous mission,along with his trusty four wheeled companion, KITT — a remarkable car forming the brains behind the team. Deven, Michael's co-ordinator, has discovered a group of international terrorists who are threatening to corrupt the amicable relationships between East and West. It is even thought that they are planning to trigger the beginning of the World War III! Deven has instructed Michael and KITT to uncover the plot and put a stop to it — unfortunately, nobody has the slightest idea what the plot really is.

Lee — CRITICISM

Never, in the field of computer software have so many waited so long for so little. Amazing really, you wait all this time and what do you get; the biggest pile of old tosh it has ever been my displeasure to play. I mean, there's just no game here at all. If you really fancied it, you could just sleep through the driving bit, which really is the only way to avoid terminal brain death. After that, you waddle past a few stupid guards and that's it. They really expect the youth of today to shell out nine quid for a game which will keep them entertained for ten minutes at the outside.

Richard — CRITICISM

Correct me if I am wrong, but wouldn't you expect after a year of hype that Ocean would come up with some worthy goods for this legendary game. Don't you believe it mateys. The game has a unique concept, unfortunately it has been executed badly, resulting in a poor product. The game is not exactly difficult to complete and I had pratically solved it within an hour, there is little challenge to the game and tends to become very monotonous in several places. If this happens with Street Hawk, Ocean will have a very angry reviewer on their hands.



At the beginning of the game you can choose which mission you wish to attempt, such as preventing the assassination of the Prime Minister, the Deputy President and all sorts of high ranking people. There are three main sections to the game. You begin on the map screen which shows several alternative destinations known to be centres of terrorism. A flashing cursor shows which city you are in and can be moved to indicate which city you are going to. If you enter an operations base from the map screen a message scrolls along the bottom of the screen and advises Michael to travel to a certain city. The joystick is used to select a destination, pressing fire takes you to the driving screen.

The driving section has a interesting option — you are able to select whether you take control of the steering or to hand it over to KITT. If you choose not to drive then you take control of the cross-hairs which can be aimed at the terrorist's helicopters which are trying to stop you completing your mission. When you arrive at the next city (there is a counter to indicate how far away you are from it), you can enter the operations' base. However, if KITT still tells you that you need to travel somewhere else then you have to go.

Once you arrive at the correct base you then have to attempt to make your way across to the other side of the room, avoiding three or four highly trained killers in the process. The base could be the terrorist's armoury, headquarters, or even the target of their plots. When the screen has been completed a clue to what will happen next appears. This process continues until you have either run out of time or sustained too much damage from enemy fire.

Anthony — CRITICISM

What a Con! For over a year now we have been waiting for this so called mega game and what do we get — an overpriced, second rate, under programmed and over hyped chestnut. In trying to give you an arcade adventure type game they fail dismally on both counts. To help you finish the game you are given a scrolling message at the bottom of the screen from KITT. (Kikit In The Thames) whose only dialogue is of the Peter and Jane type. As well as having the mental age of an eight year old KITT is also a lousy shot and and awful driver so quick switching between the two is required or your bound to end up as a black wreck.

PRESENTATION 55%
Lots of unimportant blurb.

GRAPHICS 35%
Blocky, unexciting and barely adequate.

SOUND 60%
Reasonable attempt at a rendition of the TV theme.

PLAYABILITY 51%
Well, you can move the joystick.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 23%
You can read the blurb several times.

VALUE FOR MONEY 22%
A total and unadulterated rip-off.

OVERALL 27%
A shameful attempt from Ocean after a year of design..





TOP TWENTY FOR NOVEMBER

Here we go again, the Top 20 as decided by AMTIX! readers. The figures in brackets are last month's positions.

YOUR VOTE COULD WIN YOU £40 OF SOFTW

Every month us generous types here at AMTIX! Towers will be awarding the grand sum of £40 worth of software to the lucky reader whose form is drawn from Uncle Malcolm's toupee (sic). In addition the next four readers' forms drawn will have their very own AMTIX! T Shirts and hats to love and to cherish.

This month the lucky reader who wins the £40 of software is Roberto Corti of Welbeck Crescent, Troon in Ayrshire. T-Shirts and hats will soon be winging their way to, **Heath Steward of Bromsgrove**, **Nick Chaplin of Maidenhead**, **Jonathan Burr of Long Buckby, Northants**, and **Mark**

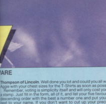
Position	Last month	Title	Publisher
1	(4)	YIE AR KUNG FU	Imagine
2	(3)	SPINDIZZY	Electric Dreams
3	(9)	GET DEXTER	PSS/ERE
4	(1)	ELITE	Firebird
5	(2)	BATMAN	Ocean
6	(6)	COMMANDO	Elite
7	(7)	WHO DARES WINS 11	Alligata
8	(19)	HARVEY HEADBANGER	Firebird
9	(-)	KNIGHT TYME	Mastertronic Added Dimension
10	(10)	SPELL OUND	Mastertronic Added Dimension
11	(5)	GREEN BERET	Imagine
12	(15)	WAY OF THE TIGER	Gremlin Graphics
13	(14)	WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST	Melbourne House
14	(-)	BOMBJACK	Elite
15	(13)	SORCERY	Virgin
16	(8)	SORCERY PLUS	Amsoft
17	(-)	THRUST	Firebird
18	(-)	BRUCE LEE	U S Gold
19	(-)	JACK THE NIPPER	Gremlin Graphics
20	(20)	WINTER GAMES	Epyx

TOP TWENTY TWITTERS

A very big THANKS to all of you AMTIX! groupies who voted this month, we don't mind if you don't agree with our joystick junkies. That's what democracy is all about — people arguing, disagreeing and fighting amongst themselves all the time! Keep your forms rolling in, that's very important if the chart is to be representative.

It did not take long for the old favourite *Elite* to be toppled from the number one spot by the very popular *Yie Ar Kung Fu* from Imagine. There are no less than five new entries, including another AMTIX! Accolade, *Jack the Nipper* from **Gremlin Graphics**! There is also a re-entry as well.

It's most important to fill in your scores, if you want a mention in the new regular Saffron's Scoreboard feature. Do fill in all the form, we noticed some people have been skipping bits, now that's very naughty, so fill in all of it, y'hear?



VARE

Thompson of Lincoln. Well done you lot and could you all write to Auntie Aggie with your chest sizes for the T-Shirts as soon as possible please.

Remember, voting is simplicity itself and will only cost you the price of a stamp. Just fill in the form, all of it, and list your five favourite games in descending order with the best a number one and put your T Shirt size next to your name. If you don't want to cut up your precious copy of AMTIX! write all the details on to a postcard or the back of an envelope, or you can always photocopy the form. Whatever you do, do it right! Please!

AMTIX! READERS TOP TWENTY CHART VOTING FORM

Please write in CAPS in an eyestrain free manner.

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

Postcode ....

The World's five hippest games in order of preference are:

TITLE

1 ....

2 ....

3 ....

4 ....

5 ....

My machine is a 464/664/6128/8256 (delete as applicable). If I am a winner the game I would like is:

....

Send your coupon to:

AMTIX! TOP TWENTY, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB

SAFFRON'S SCOREBOARD

Here it is folks, the real Scoreboard — the readers ego trip. I must admit I'm a bit peeved because the voting form was printed on the other side of my first OTS intro, and so lots of uncaring people having been ripping up their OTS pages just to get their names mentioned in the Scoreboard. This month I begin my own little awards, named the Saffron Sweeties, and I'll be picking three chaps, or chapesses, who deserve a special mention. This month it's a big hello to, Vignir Mar Haraldson who sent in his form all the way from Iceland. Secondly, it's hiya to Ian Longion from Eastwood who didn't send his form in an envelope but stuck it on the back of a postcard, what a clever chap!. (Envelope opening is really a tedious chore). Finally, Wotcha to Chris Davies from Sherwood Forest, who voted Leaderboard as his favourite game even though it hasn't been released as I write. Signed photo's will be winging their way to you all soon. So now, to the business namely Scores . . .

BATMAN (Ocean)
13,860 Ian Longion, Eastwood
7,908 Lakhveer Sahota, Wolverhampton

BOUNDER (Gremlin Graphics)
361,880 Steven Plamer, Aylesbury
354,540 Richard Eddy, AMTIX!

DAN DARE (Virgin Games)
Completed (And shot Mekon!) Mass Valducci, AMTIX! Towers
Completed Lee Paddon, AMTIX! Towers
A score of 2 points, Mike Dunn, AMTIX!

ELITE (Firebird)
655,359,999 Tony Clarke, AMTIX!
49,692,192 Credits Andrew Mpouzer
905,125 Credits Jonathon Burr, Long Buckly
412,805 Credits Richard Stait, Woking

FIFTH AXIS (Loriciels)
99%, Shane Gilmartin, Malahide
86%, Saffron Trevaskis, AMTIX!

GET DEXTER (PSS/ERE)
144,400 James Chan, Rodley
132,000 Gareth Bradley, Dyfed
108,000 Michael Stirling, Dundee
102,450 Jason Stone, Wirral
52,500 Simon Gibbs, Dronfield

GHOSTS AND GOBLINS (Elite)
212,400 Brad Howarth, Saltford.
100,250 Glenn Carey, Coverack

GREEN BERET (Imagine)
72,300 Kenneth Grundy, Ferryhill
56,000 Saffron Trevaskis, AMTIX!

JACK THE NIPPER (Gremlin Graphics)
90% B Nay, Culverstone
01% Competition Minion, AMTIX!

KNIGHT TYME (Mastertronic)
100% Jeremy Nargi, Hove
100% Daniel Webster, Buckingham
90% Richard Eddy, AMTIX!
85% Saffron Trevaskis, AMTIX!

KUNG FU MASTER (US Gold)
142,300 Jonathon Agha South Norwood

RAMBO (Ocean)
Completed Stuart Allan, Dunfermline
386,200 Mark Horton, South Greenford

SCOOBY DOO (Elite)
12,550 Richard Eddy, AMTIX!
12,000 Mike (Skippy) Dunn, AMTIX!

SPELLBOUND (Mastertronic)
Completed Andrew Foster, Birkdale
Completed Paul Gerrard, Headly Down

SPINDIZZY (Electric Dreams)
106 Jewels Andre Page, Bristol
396,950 Maurice Bowness, Merseyside
243,248 Antony Power, Bognor

STARQUAKE (Bubble Bus)
90% D Deeley, Warwick

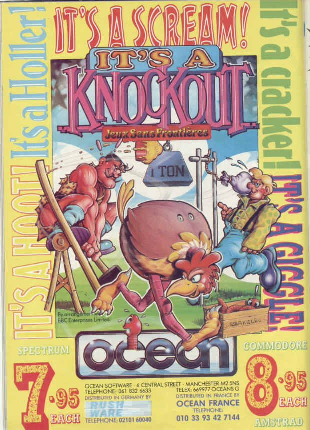
WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST (Melbourne House)
2,750,600 Eamonn Berdford, Rossendale
10 Competition Minion, AMTIX!

WHO DARES WINS II (Alligata)
998,560 Sohail Akram, Rochdale
579,700 Mark Lloyd, Co Kildare
536,760 Atlan Salid, Hackney
66,100 Jimmy Davies, Witham

YIE AR KUNG FU (Imagine)
91,227,40 Martin Draper, Askern
80,640,250 Gary Thompson, Stoke-On-Trent
37,921,020 Marc Robinson, Billingham
10,029,000 Jonathon Mc Bean, Webury
5,390,100 R Jeffrey, Paisley

More high score gore next month, my little high scoring cherubs. Send your forms in with your OTS stuff, on the challenge form or a paper bag or anything! The address, as always, is: **Saffron's Scoreboard, AMTIX!, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire. SY8 1DB.** Before I go, mega special congratulations to Massimo (or is it Mass?) Valducci, a resident here at the Towers, who, and this is confirmed by Virgin Games, was the first member of the general public to complete *Dan Dare* on August 26 — Wow! See you all soon, and remember — whatever you do keep waggling!

Saffron Trevaskis


IT'S A SCREAM!
It's a Holler!
IT'S A HOOT!
It's a cracker!
IT'S A GIGGLE!
IT'S A KNOCKOUT
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AMSTRAD

JOIN IN THE HUNT FOR THE HARDWARE (SC)ROLL

And win 50 Copies of Tempest courtesy of Electric Dreams



One of the major bug bears of being a comps minion is not minioning the comps itself, funnily enough. Sifting through thousands of envelopes is delight itself when compared to some of the *nastier* aspects of the job. Yuckiest job of all comes every day at around eleven. After a morning's hard work the pouting prima donnas want their mid morning snack. What with all the anguish of deciding what game to play next, and the internal turmoil of choosing what music to bang on the beat box next, the poor little loves are fair tuckered out. So with a loudish 'hoi' and a prod with the minion prodder the lads send me off to **Crumbs**, the local purveyor of mid morning snacks.

With list in hand (written in big letters so I can understand) it's off to Crumbs I go and every morning the same thing happens. Richard Eddy's ideal elevenses is a tasty Cheese and Pickle roll or six (it usually takes all of 3 picoseconds for that lot to disappear from Dick's hands), no problems there. No problems either with Lee 'Electrolux' Paddon's daily order of a Beef and Horseradish sauce. Getting Malcolm's Ham and Mustard Roll together is a little awkward, he likes his liquidised and fed to him through a drip feed, but I can handle that.

The most difficult point about getting the the AMTIX! lads' food together is Anthony Clarke's order of '1 HARDWARE (SC)ROLL'. Day after day this is what he asks for and day after day the women in the sarnie shop just give me an odd look. What a Hardware (sc)roll is totally evades me so I try and fob Tony off with Corned Beef and Honey or Pilchard and Saliva but he won't have none of it. 'GET ME A HARDWARE (SC)ROLL YOU HORRID LITTLE MINION' he yells 'GET ME ONE NOW!', that's when he usually starts to beat me.

I don't know what a Hardware (sc)roll looks like and maybe that's where you can help, if you can draw me a Hardware (sc)roll the continual beatings from Anthony Clarke will hopefully stop. Bashing and berating are not things I enjoy a great deal. Obviously it's got to be worth your while to come up with an answer for my great dilemma so good old **Electric Dreams** have been kind enough to supply us with fifty copies of their great new game *Tempest*.

The best fifty pictures of a Hardware (sc)roll will each receive a copy of this fab new game as long as they get their entries to:

Boring as Hell Competition, AMTIX! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB. Get your entries in by 6th November else there will be no alien zapping for you my beauties.

Ed's note to our magnificent readers:

Tony is fanatical about something called Hardware Scroll which does boring things to the screen display. But you know our Minion, he gets very confused so if you would be angels and draw a Hardware (sc)Roll I'm sure it'll keep him happy!



FINDING FOUR IN SWANMORE

SEAN MASTERSON pays a visit to the people who hate most of the software industry and get paid for being Bored and Skeptical — DELTA 4

It started off . . . interestingly. Who could resist a drive through the English countryside in the height of summer? Me. I'm making a note for next year. Avoid English summers at all costs. It poured on the way down to Hampshire's sleepy Swanmore (yes, even Ludlow was brighter) and the traffic was horrendous.

On the radio, various eminent astronomers were deep in discussion over what the probability was of ever making contact with intelligent alien life. SETI, they called it: the Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence. I was having difficulty finding the A49!

I got there in the end. **Delta 4**'s directions weren't exactly helpful. 'We're right opposite the recreation ground,' they said, neglecting to mention they were also about twenty feet below it and disguised as a modern bungalow in the middle of nowhere.

I think I should have stayed in the car. It was lonelier but far more *normal*. Fergus McNeil's mother entering Feed The Five Thousand mode, wall to wall Marillion, and **Delta 4**'s office subtly disguised as Fergus McNeil's bedroom . . . All this and the drive back was still to come.

But we did talk. Myself, Fergus McNeil and Judith Child. Most of our conversion was totally and utterly libellous. Here's what's left.

SM: Start from the beginning. Go on, tell me all about it.

FM: Delta 4 consists of myself, Judith Child, Colin Buckett and special guest star, Andrew Sprunt (Spud). It started by accident — as a hobby, with me getting a ZX81 when they were fashionable. Moved onto the Spectrum, saw an advert for *The Quill*. Bought it. Wrote a game — which was rubbish. And just by chance, Tony Bridges got a copy. We thought, well we might as well have a label, so **Delta 4** was born.

SM: No particular reason for the name?

FOUR SIDED TRIANGLES

FM: My dad thought it up to end an argument. Simple as that. Though we did come out with an interesting reason later, which was how many four-sided triangles have you seen?

SM: That's interesting?

FM: Anyway. I think it was after watching *Spitting Image* that we thought, why not be piss-take artists. That was the beginning of *Bored of the Rings*. We phoned Ian Ellery at **CRL** who asked whether we were programmers. We said we weren't. He said he wasn't interested . . . and about three days later got in touch and said he would buy the game.

CRL had close ties with **Silversoft** and the game ended up appearing about the time of last year's PCW Show under the **Silversoft** label. People started getting interested in **Delta 4** so both **CRL** and **Silversoft** said they would like a follow up — preferably in time for Christmas.

We had about a month. Things were also getting dodgy between **CRL** and **Silversoft**, more than was healthy. Anyway, we wrote *Robin of Sherlock* in what — three to four weeks?

JC: Something like that.

FM: We went to see both companies, ended up signing with **Silversoft** and they promptly went down the drain. We got very pissed off and decided to start being careful. **CRL** were very good to us throughout that period and as they owned the rights to *Bored* anyway, it made its appearance on the Commodore. After that, we decided to work for as many people as possible . . .

SM: Like Level 9?

FM: (Shock/horror expression)

JC: You probably know more about it than we do.

FM: Well, I've signed a non-disclosure agreement. So, the 128K Spectrum launch was a big break for us. We hunted around for as many jobs as it was possible to get in the space of time and took up a few offers afterwards. *Colour of Magic* for **Piranha** was a result of that. We did have one game called *Galaxis* (sniggers all round) which sold the grand total of one copy! So we sold it to **Global** who released it on *Fourmost Adventures* whereupon it received rave reviews in several magazines. I'd just like to state for the record that *Galaxis* is (unprintable)!

SM: *Bored* isn't an official version of the Harvard Lampoon book?

FM: No. Every time we tried to reach Harvard Lampoon, we got a jeans shop. It's too rude anyway

SM: I take it, there isn't exactly a strict working schedule?

FM: That's right. Well, people tend to think that **Delta 4** doesn't do anything serious, which is fair enough but we are setting up a new label called **Abstract Concepts**, so we will be producing some serious adventures on there.

USING THE QUILL

SM: Still using *The Quill*?

FM: We've actually got a new system under development. It's totally flexible. A very sophisticated parser, icon driven commands, very nice graphics. It's for 128K or disk based machines only. It has loads of other facilities such as guide book, notepad, music . . . We won't advertise anything till it's ready. For the moment, we're sticking with *The Quill*. Wait until you see what **Gilsoft** are bringing out later this year!

Basically, we parody anything that's established. We take something and say, 'How can we take the piss out of this?' And then we just sit there for ages and ages, coming up with ideas. Locations and text follow next. Objects come

FERGUS AND SPUD DISCUSS COMPANY POLICY

next. Then we try and put in little sketches, like the Trolls in *Bored*. Over the last week, there's usually a rush to get the graphics done. *Skeptical* is a kind of relaxing work that progresses in between all the other bits.

SM: That's your ongoing saga?

FM: Yes. Then we do the debugging and stuff.

SM: Who does the graphics?

FM: I do. We all work on the rest of it. The way it's set up, we can all do bits. We try to keep it all together. By the time the game comes out, it's normally okay. Then we do the map. The blurb never reads quite the way I'd like it but that goes for the games too. It starts off generally relaxed but so much has to be left out because of time or lack of memory.

Some people we go out of our way to be horrible to.

SM: Small companies are fairly fragile. Are you going to survive?

FM: We'll be around for, well — we'll be here next year. We've never gone into the red at the bank. We have a policy of not buying anything we don't already have the money for. Hopefully, we should be alright. When *Abstract Concepts* comes into the light, it's going to be a big thing for a while. I'd very much like to carry on doing, er.. Well, **Level 9** is the most challenging job we have come across. They're people who know exactly what they're doing, have a good system and are an established name. **Infocom** can't do some of the things they can.

Delta 4 is a contract software house. I like to see its name on covers. If it comes to a choice between something else and **Delta 4**, I'd rather see **Delta 4**. It can get ridiculous. If I died now, I'd still get credited in future **Delta 4** game reviews. I work on everything we do but so does everybody else. Judith's name is often misspelt.

JC: Derek Brewster misses me off altogether.

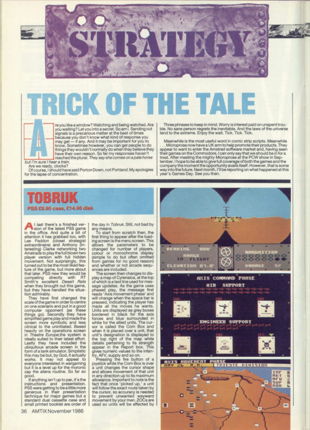
Despite my sympathy for Judith's desire for notoriety, evening was drawing near and though the sun was finally peeping out between the clouds, I couldn't trust the weather anymore. Anyway, even Leprechauns have to sleep. So, I left the integrated iconoclasts and set off home. No doubt,they would be contemplating the pub and some liquid refreshment to aid their inspiration. It's all right for some . . .

Delta 4 has all the traits of a young company. They're enthusiastic, irreverent, headstrong, ambitious — and funny. Not exactly the qualifications the city might look for, but they have other assets to offer. They're successful, talented and perceptive. I've seen people struggling to get a game out, failing somewhere along the line and disappearing again. Now I've seen people who have made it. How, I don't know.

Four-sided triangles? I really will have to think about that one.

Sean Masterson





STRATEGY

TRICK OF THE TALE

Are you like a window? Watching and being watched. Are you waiting? Let you into a secret. So am I. Sending out signals is a precarious matter at the best of times because you don't know what kind of response you may get — if any. And it may be important for you to know. Sometimes however, you can get people to do things they wouldn't normally do when they believe they have their own reason. So far my responses haven't reached the plural. *They say she comes on a pale horse but I'm sure I hear a train.*

Are we ready, clocks?

Of course, I should have said Port*on* Down, not Port*land*. My apologies for the lapse of concentration.

Three phrases to keep in mind. Worry is interest paid on unspent trouble. No sane person regrets the inevitable. And the laws of the universe tend to the extreme. Enjoy the wait. Tick. Tick. Tick.

Meanwhile is the most useful word in comic strip scripts. Meanwhile . . . Microprose now have a UK arm to help promote their products. They appear to want to enter the Amstrad software market and, having seen their games on the Commodore, I can only say that we should be in for a treat. After meeting the mighty Microprose at the PCW show in September, I hope to be able to give full coverage of both the games and the company the moment the opportunity avails itself. However, that is some way into the future. Next month, I'll be reporting on what happened at this year's Games Day. See you then.

TOBRUK

PSS £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk

At last there's a finished version of the latest PSS game in the office. And quite a bit of attention it has grabbed too, with Lee Paddon (closet strategist extraordinaire) and Anthony (interesting) Clarke networking two Amstrads to play the full blown two player version with full hidden movement. Not surprisingly, this turned out to be the most liked feature of the game, but more about that later. PSS new they would be competing directly with RT Smith's excellent *Desert Rats* when they brought out this game, but they have handled the situation admirably.

They have first changed the scale of the game in order to centre on one scenario and put in a good computer opponent (as these things go). Secondly they have simplified game play and made the screen more symbolic and less clinical to the uninitiated. Based heavily on the operations screen in *Theatre Europe*, the system is ideally suited to their latest effort. Lastly they have included the ubiquitous arcade screen in the form of a tank simulator. Simplistic this may be but, by God, it actually works. It may not appeal to everyone interested in wargaming but it is a level up for the moronic zap the aliens routine. So far so good.

If anything isn't up to par, it's the instructions and presentation. PSS were getting to be a little more generous in their presentation technique for major games but a standard dual cassette case and small printed booklet are order of the day in *Tobruk*. Still, not bad by any means.

To start from scratch then, the first thing to appear after the loading screen is the menu screen. This allows the parameters to be changed for number of players, colour or monochrome display (simple to do but often omitted from games for no good reason) and whether or not arcade sequences are included.

The screen then changes to display a map of Cyrenaica, at the top of which is a text line used for message updates. As the game uses phased play, the message first reads 'Axis movement phase' and will change when the space bar is pressed, indicating the player has made all the moves he wants. Units are displayed as grey boxes bordered in black for the axis forces and blue surrounded in white for the allied units. The cursor is called the Com Box and when it is placed over a unit, that unit's designation is displayed to the top right of the map while details pertaining to its strength appear in the Report box. This gives numeric values to the infantry, AFV, supply and so on.

Pressing the fire button of a joystick while the Com Box is over a unit changes the cursor shape and allows movement of that unit in any direction up to its maximum allowance. Important to note is the fact that once 'picked up,' a unit will follow the exact route taken by the cursor, so accuracy is needed to prevent unwanted wayward movement by your men. ZOCs are used so units will be affected by

contact with the enemy.

The assault phase is only important when one or more of your units is adjacent to an enemy unit. If there is an imbalanced encounter, it's possible to select either which of your opponents to attack or how many of your units will attack an opponent. If the arcade sequence is running, you enter tank simulation mode, controlling both the main armament of the tank and the machine gun (as well as driving of course). Your tank is not obviously modelled on any vehicle of the era but provides good graphics of an opponent's vehicles. These would seem to be modelled on the Panzerkampfwagen IV ausf H in standard desert camouflage though the turrets are a little fat, bearing more resemblance to Russian T62s. Not a bad effort, though. The tank has three modes to complicate matters and make the fire fight more interesting.

Later in the turn, a player may operate airstrikes, salvage or sabotage operations and minefield clearances all from an easy to use icon driven screen. Targets on the map are selected afterwards and the operations are carried out during the following turn. Finally, it is possible to rebuild units from reserves so long as they are in range of a supply unit (white on black). Take care to control these units at all times. If your forces go out of range, get cut off, or the enemy destroys a supply unit, you will be in deep trouble.

The game plays very well. There is a neatness and pace that make you want to go on, even when the chips are down (I hate that phrase). The presentation allows the uninitiated to get straight into playing but avoids patronising those familiar with this type of simulation game. The computer opponent is not the most adept I've come across, and I don't see the challenge lasting too long before two player games are necessary. Still, the program's refreshing simplicity and playability do not detract from a reasonably realistic game. It's an above average game for an average price. Make of that what you will. However, the game can only be truly enjoyed in networked mode. And that's where Lee comes in . . .

The two player option is a very interesting idea. Two Arnolds can be 'networked' together using the joystick port. When this happens, each player sees only their own forces and any enemy in contact with those forces. This really creates a true fog of war and allows the German player to try different strategies. Playing the Brits is always going to be a bit of a passive role, the structure of the supply system make it impossible to make any deep raids into enemy territory, but there are a number of different ways to defend. The Brit can either throw everything at the Germans as soon as the main thrust of the German drive becomes apparent, or the German can be lured deep into British territory before really going for the jugular.

Obviously playing the Germans is more fun — but really tough. You are probably going to have to fight all the British mobile forces before making a breakthrough. It is tricky to really retain the element of surprise. But don't throw it away all together. There is plenty of time, so try a few feints with a few Italian plodders before committing the bulk of your mobile forces. Obviously the south will still be favourite as it will avoid the British infantry, but obviously, the northern route will have the element of surprise as well as allowing the Italians to be used.

Once committed, although the Germans are more mobile than the Brits, they will be limited to the speed of their supply dump which they must protect at all costs — one lucky guess by the Brits and the whole lot is out of supply.

Despite what appeared to me to be a few historical shortcomings, the game is worth the money for the networked aspect alone. It's a shame the action screens don't work in the two player mode; I could have endless fun blowing up Sean's Panzers. ***Oh really?*** **— SM**

Lee Paddon



Presentation	74%
Graphics	81%
Complexity	40%
Authenticity	65%
Lastability	74%
Value for money	77%
Overall	76%

JOHNNY REB II

Lothlorien, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk

This is the first offering from **Lothlorien** for some time and is a follow up to one of their oldest and most successful titles. Based on the American Civil War, *Johnny Reb II* is a one or two player strategy presenting the player(s) with a 'typical' action rather than a recreation of one of the many historic battles such as Bull Run or Gettysburg.

For those in need of a quick history lesson, the ACW was the result of differences between the Northern and Southern states of the USA mainly (but not entirely) over legalised slavery. Neither side actually wanted the confrontation which lasted from 1861-65 but both were caught up in unavoidable conflict in a war so bitter and complex, it literally set brother against brother. It holds interest from the strategists' point of view because it has been called the first modern war.

This terminology is used more in the context of new weaponry than anything else. Repeating rifles were rare during the war, but gained in numbers towards the end. Gatling guns, the forerunners of the modern machine gun were also used occasionally and cavalry, whilst still maintaining an effective role in combat was armed more with slug throwing weapons than swords. The war was further complicated by the fact that whilst the North possessed the industrial might and numerical superiority, the South was better organised and trained and had fewer commitments. All this explained **Lothlorien's** first foray into this era on the old Spectrum.







Their excuse this time was increased sophistication and better gameplay. So, how have they done?

Well, the most obviously notable feature of the new game is that it is apparently 100% machine code (something unheard of in the pre-Cambrian days of the earlier version's release) and it loads very quickly indeed. A passable title screen is then succeeded by a menu that allows limited modification of the game's parameters. Just about everything is user definable from the control keys to the balance of forces, the terrain features of the battlefield, where and when the various reinforcements arrive, game strength (on the one player version) and screen colours.

I was most impressed with the choices available to the player. When playing solitaire, the player may choose either side thanks to a flexible computer opponent (though I later discovered that the opponent is not actually that hard to beat on the first two levels). Safety features ensure that you cannot alter the force played by the computer to make things easier on yourself. It's possible to have hidden movement on the single player game but all units are always visible in two player mode.

Once the game begins, play is very straightforward. Again this is due to attention to detail in presentation. Under joystick control, a cursor is simply placed over the unit to be ordered before pressing the fire button. Information about the unit is then presented on the screen in a colour code to show levels of ammunition, morale, strength and efficiency. This display appears below the 'action' screen. To the right of the screen, a series of icons appear, each indicating a possible action such as dig in, advance, charge or fire (not all these options are available to all units, as you will see). Joystick movement allows selection of the required order with confirmation coming from a second press of the fire button. Some orders may be elaborated upon. For instance, when advancing, you are asked whether the unit is to advance firing or not. As units carry out their orders on the main screen at the end of a turn, the unit symbols themselves will change to show the current status of that unit.

Limited sound effects are employed during combat. This is normally ranged combat though melee is possible between adjacent units. Units may retreat, become routed or be destroyed depending on their performance in combat. The unit types are infantry, cavalry, artillery and supply (these units cannot fight). The exact scale of the units is never really explained throughout the game or manual but by the nature of movement, I would suspect it lies somewhere between platoon or company level.

There is a standard scenario. A Confederate force is approaching a vastly outnumbered Union outfit which must defend its side of the map while reinforcements arrive during the course of the game. It's a basic but flexible arrangement which should present plenty of challenge in a two player game. The one player version only really comes into its own on the hardest level. The on screen presentation is both logical and clear but the tiny instruction booklet is both cramped and badly laid out. There is no key reference so setting up can be slow until you become accustomed to the procedures.

Johnny Reb II is definitely a worthy successor to the original but at £9.95, they are asking the top end price for a game of this type. Those who find flexibility more important than demanding scenarios should enjoy it.

Presentation 84%
Graphics 80%
Complexity 85%
Authenticity 82%
Lastability 79%
Value for money 81%
Overall 82%

SCOOBY DOOBY DOO WHERE ARE YOU COMPETITION

AMTIX! COMPETITION

50 Copies Of Elite's Latest Game Up For Grabs In the PlaySchool Colouring Comp!

Dear Comps Minion
I find your competitions far too difficult. I mean, all this artistic stuff we have to do, and me not being artistic in the slightest. It's not fair!
Yours with love,
Albert Postlethwaite

Dear Albert
Sorry my comps are too hard for you, so here is a one off, special like, just for you. All you have to do is join the dots that nice Mr Frey has drawn to make a mystery picture, once you've done that colour it in to the best of your ability. Use all your favourite colours — use your imagination, a bit of artistic license, and who knows, maybe you will win.
Yours with love, Comps Minion

Anyone else who fancies a go is most welcome. We've got fifty copies of Elite's *Scooby Doo* game to give away to the people we think make the best use of their colouring set. When you've coloured in the picture post it off to:

Scooby Doo Colouring Comp, AMTIX!, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire. SY8 1DB. Entries must be in by 6th November. Get to work and you could win a copy of the game. Happy colouring!

THE COMPLETE A-Z OF THIS Y

Scaling The Olympian Heights With

In this special report MALCOLM HARDING, RICHARD EDDY AND BEN STONE recap on this year's PCW Show at Olympia

Returning to Ludlow after the PCW show is a bit like going back to school after the Christmas holidays. All the pomp and circumstance are packed away, all the nice PR people get locked up in their cells for another year and all the press releases, cardboard hats and stickers that litter the floor are swept away. So, what we will do for all those readers who saw us at the show, and indeed those who were unable to come along, is give you the unofficial A-Z quick tour around the show.

A IS FOR ACTIVISION

Probably one of the most impressive stands at the show. Rumours have it that it cost around £40,000 to build — but it was well worth it. As well as having the odd game to play there were a few videos running on the screens that surrounded the stand. Look out for *The Eidolon*, *Ballblazer* and *Bactron*. The last is a new game only available on the Amstrad and involves a cute beasty (a sort of chicken egg on legs) who wanders around inside a body destroying all kinds of nasty bacteria by spitting at them — all great fun!

Interesting to see **System Three** had taken up residence on the **Activision** stand after being banned from the show last year because of their 'saucy' exploits.

In the eternal search for freebies, Dicky tries chatting up a robot for a T Shirt.

ARIOLASOFT

Gorgeous, pouting but diminutive Amanda Barry headed up the stand with her entourage providing firm support for her (two) front runners! Promised releases are two new signings, *Challenge of the Gobots* and *Centurions* — based on the popular TV cartoons. Also hanging around the **Ariolasoft** stand was Denby, a real robot who proved a firm favourite with the youngsters who were totally transfixed by him. Interesting to see that CRASH Girlie Tipster, Hannah Smith was also taken in by the dustbin on two legs, er — wheels.

B IS FOR BEYOND

Coming soon from **Beyond** is the official version of *Star Trek*, to tie in with the twentieth anniversary of the mega television series, and their stand was modelled on the bridge of the starship *Enterprise*. Although they were slightly reluctant to let us play the game, having videos of it only, the stand was adorned with winsome girlies, one of whom was rumoured to be a Page 3 model called Sarah Jane, from the back of **Beyond**. Pictured here is Dicky engrossed in getting a preview copy of the game from the ever-smiling, Jane Smith. At least, that's his story, and he is sticking to it!

Dicky finds that getting to grips with the software industry isn't all hard work . . .

C IS FOR CRL

Tucked away in a small corner by the entrance stood a formidable black construction with just three simple letters proclaiming **CRL**'s arrival, but not much to see. However, we did bump into one of the games mistresses from **St Bride's School**, the team behind **CRL**'s next adventure release *Bugsy*. Find out more in the Big Blue Bunny Competition on page 96 of this issue.

A young lady from St Bride's finishing school for girls explains the advantage of shopping at Dorothy Perkins.

EAR'S PCW SHOW IN LONDON

out The Aid of Ropes Or Crampons

D IS FOR DOMARK

The **Domark** stand was given over to their latest blockbuster, *Trivial Pursuit* which collects an AMTIX! Accolade, a ZZAP! Sizzler and a CRASH Smash all in one go. Cuddly Uncle Dave Carlos — Mr PR — was their representative and bounced happily around the show in his usual jovial manner, handing out very little! He always seemed to be too busy to breathe but it was nice to see him, all the same.

E IS FOR ELITE SYSTEMS

The delectable **Elite** people, all smiles and press packs, were showing off their potential new products. The one that attracted most attention was the hydraulic *Space Harrier* arcade game, which had juveniles climbing all over it squashing their lovely little pinkies — and it's no more than they deserved. The other *Space Harrier* machine was smashed up on the second day by the business visitors who couldn't take all the excitement after playing with their new improved spreadsheet programs. *Ikari Warriors* also had a look in.

F IS FOR THE FIREBIRD ENTOURAGE

Nice? Colin Fungi of **Firebird** was handing out ever—so—trendy designer glasses by the bucketful. Gary Liddon (he of **Thalamus** fame) was well pleased with his four pairs, but poor Ben Stone (Newsfield) only managed a miserable three. Pity they were so dark you couldn't see where you were going. On display at the **Firebird** stand was their new game *Druid*, which should be available soon, and from **Odin** there's *Heartland* — a mystical adventure. *Cholo* is a game set in the post holocaust war where you control a droid and looks pretty good. *Pandora* should be making an appearance soon as well. In this you return to Earth after a very long inter-galactic cruise and find the world inhabited with aliens — what can you do? Dunno we guess you will have to wait and find out. There should also be some excellent £1.99 games in the very near future.

G IS FOR GARGOYLE (AND FTL)

Faster Than Light is the new label from **Gargoyle Games** and faster than light is the perfect way to describe the manner in which they were handing out sweat shirts to the Newsfield bunch. *Light Force*, currently on the Spectrum should soon be gracing our monitor screens and is an excellent shoot 'em up with some very special graphics. FTL looks like a label to watch out for! Greg (here, have a sweatshirt) Follis, a jolly nice man indeed (creep, creep ta very much).

H IS FOR HEWSON

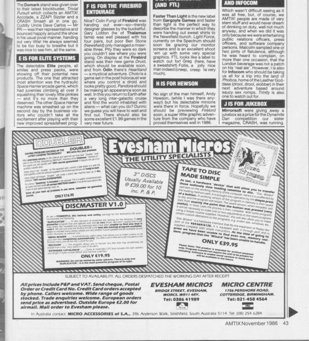
No sign of the man himself, Andy Hewson, (while I was there anyway!) but his delectable minions were there in force. Hopefully we should be previewing *Firelord* soon, a super little graphic adventure from the company who have proved themselves well in 1986.

I IS FOR INTOXICATION AND INFOCOM

Which wasn't difficult seeing as it was all free, but, of course, we AMTIX! people are made of very stern stuff and would never dream of drinking on duty, well not much anyway, and when we did it was only because we were entertaining public relations officers, press officers, and software company persons. Malcolm sampled one or two pints of flatulence, although he was heard to complain, on more than one occasion, that the London beverage was not a patch on his 'real ale'. However, I is also for **Infocom** who should be taking us all for a trip into the land of *Phobos*, home of the Leather Goddess (drool, drool, slobber) in their next adventure based around saucy sex romps. *Trinity* is also one to watch out for.

J IS FOR JUKEBOX

Mirrorsoft were giving away a jukebox as a prize for the *Dynamite Dan* competition our sister magazine, CRASH, was running.



THE COMPLETE A-Z OF THIS YEAR'S PCW SHOW IN LONDON



Pat (Once) Bitton (Twice shy) informs me that *Dynamite Dan 11* on the Amstrad should be with us soon. Even sooner is the imminent arrival of *Icon Jon* a hilarious adventure full of puns, featuring a little robot trapped inside a computer program full of bugs. He has to solve certain puzzles before the program crashes.

K IS FOR KINDERGARTEN

. . . And all the 12 year old business visitors on the trade days who kept hassling us for autographs and T-shirts because they just couldn't wait . . .

L IS FOR LEVEL 9

Level 9 were showing off their near-completed *Archers* game. The press office also housed a sheep who was most definitely alive and kicking (Ouch!!). The game features all the characters from the radio series as well as the good old Bull — I wonder if they serve Old Flatulence bitter there?

M IS FOR MABLE, SORRY (OUCH!, STOP IT) FRAN

Fran Mable, our desireable dogsbody here at AMTIX! Towers, was on the Newsfield stand all week handing out stickers, selling mags and T-shirts and dealing with lots of rampaging readers. We thought she deserved a mention as she is now awaiting an urgent service on her aching feet. Any offers readers?

N IS FOR NEWSFIELD

Phew, and wasn't it hectic? But, honestly, it was nice to see you all coming to the stand. We certainly attracted more than our fair share of attention from the crowds and there hardly seemed a minute when one of the three magazine editors (Malcolm Harding of AMTIX!, Graeme Kidd of CRASH, and Gary Penn of ZZAP 64 were not in demand). We were all pretty tired after the show, what with having to come back and write a mag. Big non—event was the battle of the Girlie Tipsters. Our very own Hannah Smith (she of CRASH fame) threw down the gauntlet and challenged Melissa Ravingdame of C & V G non—fame to a battle. We had a paddling pool and lots of green jelly but where was Melissa, I wonder?

O IS FOR OBELIX AND OCEAN

Obelix is one of the characters from the new **Melbourne House** arcade adventure, *Asterix and The Magic Cauldron*. Based on the amazingly popular cartoon stories, the game looks promising on the Commodore but no pictures of the Amstrad version yet . . .

Who nearly gave Dicky a heart attack when he asked for *Knight Rider* and they happily gave it to him! Reviewed in this issue it's in the shops now. Amazing as it may seem *Street Hawk* is near completion (again??!!) and to be honest it does look very good. It features SH on his motorbike whizzing up and down the streets and is viewed from overhead. You can fire, jump over cars and do all sorts of things that are ever-so-clever. About time too.

P IS FOR PAUL WOAKES

Paul Woakes, creator of *Mercenary* was at the show on the **Novagen** stand. *Mercenary* is near completion on the Amstrad and we hope to be reviewing it shortly. The game is set in the central city of a distant planet where you've crash-landed. Your objective is to escape through one of the three possible routes. Unfortunately, you've landed smack in the middle of a war between two forces, though you may be able to work this to your advantage by running mercenary missions for the opposing sides. The game is displayed in 3D vector graphics with city buildings and a massive underground complex just waiting to be explored. The game has already been a huge hit on the Commodore 64 and looks set to do well here on the Arnold too.

The chaps from Romantic Robot looking very happy in their ever—so—smart sweat shirts. Remarkable, really, they've been there for five days non—stop.

Nosferatu, Mandy Keyho and friend are always willing if anyone wants to pop in for a bite.

Q IS FOR QUEUES

Which everybody hates, and believe me there were lots of the damn things. A queue for tickets, a queue to play the games, a queue to meet programmers, a queue for the popcorn, a queue for drink, a queue for the loos . . . (Ooooo!!)

R IS FOR ROGUE TROOPER AND RICKY STEEL

Rogue Trooper, the game based on the 2000 AD hero, is set for release by **Piranha** soon. The delicious Mandy (let me feed your Piranha) Keyho, has just let us have *Popeye* and *Trapdoor*, and both are reviewed in this issue. If you're wondering who the funny looking chap is in the photo it's Nosferatu the Vampyre who will be getting his teeth into our screens in October, just in time for Halloween. (Eeeeek)

Mikro-Gen were showing off their new logo and also their new cult hero, *Ricky Steel* around whom their latest game is written. Sadly, the macho Mr Steel threw a wobbler on the first day of the show and had to receive a bit of medical attention. Happily he was back on his feet next day and no doubt enjoyed himself.

S IS FOR SICKNESS

Which we all had on Sunday morning, enough said? S is also for *Sanxion*, the first **Thalamus** release on the Commodore 64, whose music (the Romeo and Juliet suite) drove us round the twist. S is also for Skippy, our in-house (some of the time) model (see page 103) and reviewer who could soon be making a regular appearance in these hallowed pages.

T IS THANK YOU

To everyone who gave us Sweatshirts and T-Shirts, and sunglasses and software, and competition prizes and kisses, and hugs and drinks, and food and beds. T is also for Two, the number of the *Multiface* that **Romantic Robot** have brought out — review this issue and definitely worth checking out.

U IS FOR US GOLD

US Gold are promising lots of new arcade conversions soon, although none were to be seen except in arcade form. However, ever—so—réliable, Tim Chaney, informed us that they are VERY good and bound to make lots of money, as usual. *Gauntlet* is apparently the one to watch out for, preview as soon as possible. *Galvan* was also on display on the **US Gold** stand, soon to be released by **Imagine** who are part of **US Gold** who are part of **Ocean** who are part of **Centresoft** who are etc etc . . .

V IS FOR VORTEX

Vortex were also displaying their wares on the **US Gold** stand (who wasn't?) Main attraction was *Revolution*, which is an Accolade this month.

W IS FOR WALLIES

The show was full of them. W, believe it or not, is also for *War*, **Martech**'s next effort, which failed to work even after a whole week of 'tweaking'.

X IS FOR (E)XCUSE

Because no companies beginning with X were worthy of mention (hah!) but believe us, quite a few people made up a lot of excuses when asked where their promised wares were for our hungry reviewers!

Y IS FOR Y

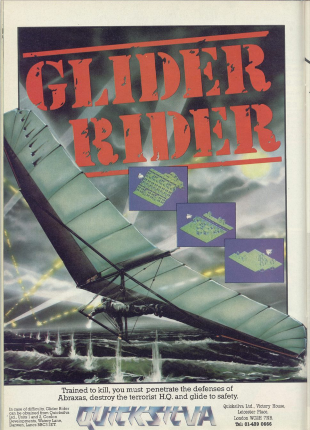
Like, Y weren't you there? Or perhaps you were. Sorry, that was a bit lame, wasn't it but it was the best we could do?

Z IS FOR ZZZZZZZZZ . . .

Goodnight and (snore) see (wheeze) you (nod, nod) next (yawn) year. Zzzzzzzzz . . .


GREMLIN
ALWAYS AHEAD
Footballer of the Year
The game to answer every boyhood dream – the chance to make it to the very top of football stardom. Starting on your path to glory as a 17 year old apprentice with a Fourth Division team and only £500 and 10 goal scoring cards in your pockets, the footballing world is at your feet. Adopt the identity of a professional footballer and develop a career through the ups and downs of match days, transfer deals and injuries etc. Display your talents in Football League, U.E.F.A., F.A. and Milk Cup games and then if you're good enough the ultimate accolade of your sport, the Footballer of the Year Award.
FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR
Footballer of the Year
C16 + 4 £6.95
MSX Spectrum 48K £7.95
Amstrad, BBC/Electron Atari CBM 64/128 £9.95
Avenger
C16 +4 CBM 64/128 MSX Spectrum 48K Amstrad £9.95
Avenger
First came "The Way of the Tiger" the martial arts classic in which you had to prove your physical skills to become a Ninja. Now you have to prove your supreme mental agility in the second part of the Way of the Tiger saga "Avenger", the ultimate arcade adventure. Yaemon the Grand Master of Flame has assassinated your foster father Naijishi and stolen the Scrolls of Kettsuin. You have sworn to the God Kwon that you will avenge Yaemon's murderous act and recover the sacred scrolls. Your enemies are many, varied and all are deadly. All your skills courage and nerve will be called upon when you begin the final conflict in the Great Keep. Good Luck... only the brave hearted will survive.
Avenger (Way of the Tiger II)
Gremlin Graphics
Alpha House, 10 Carver Street


GREMLIN
OF THEIR TIME
Future Knight
C16 + 4
£6.95
Trailblazer
MSX Spectrum 48K
£7.95
CBM 64/128
Amstrad
£9.95
Disk
Amstrad Disk
CBM 64/128
Disk
£14.95
Future Knight
Arise Sir Randolph to take up the challenge of death that has befallen the fair maid Amelia, held in the evil clutches of Spelbott the Terrible. Acting upon an inter-dimensional distress signal from the galactic cruiser SS Rustbucket, don your Omnibott Mark IV attack suit and venture forth in pursuit of your beloved's captors. Defend yourself nobly against the Besteria Security droids. Fight your way through 20 gruelling levels onto the planet's surface into Spelbott's castle where the fate of Amelia lies with the outcome of your mortal combat with the awesome Henchodroid. Is there any gallantry and bravery left in this modern day universe?
Available November
FUTURE KNIGHT
TRAILBLAZER
Thunder into the unknown at a breakneck speed, pushing your reflexes to their limits in this definitely exhilarating journey that's not one for the fainthearted. Roll left, roll right avoiding the endless chasms of doom that lay in and around the squares of mystery. Squares that will sometimes slow your progress, on occasion with fatal consequences and sometimes speed up unexpectedly or make you jump automatically. Keep a keen eye on the clock as the quicker you complete your task the higher will be your bonus. CBM 64 version is an amazing 2 player simultaneous game. Amstrad Disc version contains extra features.
Trailblazer
Available November


GLIDER RIDER
Trained to kill, you must penetrate the defenses of
Abraxas, destroy the terrorist H.Q. and glide to safety.
In case of difficulty, Glider Rider can be obtained from Quicksilva Ltd., Units 1 and 2, Conlon Developments, Watery Lane, Darwen, Lancs BBC3 2ET.
QUICKSILVA
Quicksilva Ltd., Victory House,
Leicester Place,
London WC2H 7NB.
Tel: 01-439 0666

THE AMAZING . . . BANG..BANG..SPLOT.. YOU'RE DEAD COMP !

AMTIX! COMPETITION

WIN A DAY OUT PLAYING SOLDIERS . . . (With no spuds to peel first)

50 Copies of PIRANHA's Strike Force Cobra on offer!

PIRANHA's latest game, could be described as the thinking Amster's *Rambo*. In it, four commandos must infiltrate a robot guarded complex and try to snatch four number codes that will make up a password with which to save the world from destruction. The job calls for the best muscle available and so mercenaries are picked at the start of the game from a list of named personal files with which to make up *Strike Force Cobra*.

To mark the launch of the game, **PIRANHA** are setting a competition and offering the chance of a lifetime. Two winners will get the chance to spend a day playing Combat Zone — but not on a computer — in a real life combat area shooting the opposition. If dear reader, this seems a little risky fret not, for no blood is lost in this conflict. The guns used to shoot at 'the enemy' fire paint, not bullets, so by the end of the day a very messy time is had by all. The eventual objective is to capture the opposition's flag and declare yourselves the victors. The two winners will also collect their very own **PIRANHA** Sweatshirt, and fifty runners up will receive a copy of the game.

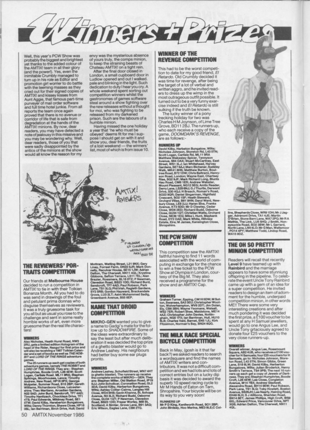
All you have to do is make up a personal file like the ones in *Strike Force Cobra* about the team you would use to infiltrate AMTIX! Towers. You can garnish them with a drawing of the person(s) if you like too. Just to help you along a little we've included Crumbly's file to start you off.

Entries must be in by Thursday, November 6

Send your entry to **Strike Force AMTIX!, AMTIX! Towers, P O Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB**.



Winners + Prizes



Well, this year's PCW Show was probably the biggest and brightest yet thanks to the added colour of the AMTIX! team in all their glory (and the power!). Yes, even the inimitable Crumbly managed to turn up in his role as Editor and promotion girl worrier to do battle with the teeming masses as they cried out for their signed copies of AMTIX! and kissey kisses from Aunt Aggie, that famous part-time purveyer of mail order software and full time hotel junkie. From all reports the team once again proved that there is no avenue or corridor of life that is safe from degredation at the hands of the AMTIX! minions. By now, dear readers, you may have detected a note of jealousy in this missive and you may be wondering why. Well, dear readers, those of you that were sadly disappointed by the antics of the minions at the show would all know the reason for my envy was the mysterious absence of yours truly, the comps minion, to keep the straining beasts of Chateau AMTIX! on a tight rein.

After the final door closed in London, a small cupboard door in Ludlow opened and out I walked, pale and blinking in the light. Such dedication to duty I hear you cry. A whole weekend spent sorting out competition winners whilst the gastronomes of games software steal around a show fighting over the new releases without a thought for moi, who was fighting to be released from my darkened prison. Such are the labours of a humble minion.

Having missed the one holiday a year that 'he who must be obeyed' deems fit for me I suppose I should get on with it and show you, dear friends, the fruits of a lost weekend — the winners' list, most of which is from issue 10.

THE REVIEWERS' PORTRAITS COMPETITION

Our friends at **Melbourne House** decided to run a competition in AMTIX! to tie in with their Tolkien Bonanza Month. All you had to do was send in drawings of the foul and petulant prima donnas who disguise themselves as reviewers. It was a truly gruesome task for you all but as usual you rose to the challenge and sent in some really horrible works of art, even more gruesome than the real life characters!

WINNERS
Alex Nicholas, Heath Hurst Road, NW3 2RU, gets a limited edition Hologram of the head of the Rider, Nazgul for first prize and will also be receiving a 1987 Tolkien Calendar and a set of books as well as *THE HOBBIT* and *LORD OF THE RINGS* adventure games.

The 25 runners up each get copies of both adventure games, namely *THE HOBBIT* and *LORD OF THE RINGS*. They are:- Stephen Humphries, Boode Croft, L28 4EW; Scott Logan, Carlisle Road, ML11 9RA; Stephen Spikings, Moorhouses, Lancs; Timothy Andrew, New Road, HP16 0PX; George Mulpeter, Summer Road, B15 2BP; Gareth Williams, Richardsons Close, Leicestershire; Theo Martiano, Arcadian Gardens, N22 5AD; John Burd, Sandcroft, TF7 4AD; Timothy Hanitzsch, Chockleys Drive, TF1 4TS; Paul Edwards, Mildmay Road, SE1 5TW; David Kilby, Hereberton Bungalows, Wilts; Denny Thornton, Shaws Close, HP16 0SL; Ian Berriman, Birch Drive, Hull; David Mottram, Watling Street, L21 9NX; Gary Liney, Forrest Farm, DN22 8JR; Mark Donnelly, Reculver House, SE15 1JW; Adrian Dalton, The Cherwell, NN11 4QL; Krystina Gibbons, Sefton Terrace, LS11 7EL; Alan Brazier, Rossmere, BL16 6TZ; P Newman, Clevedon Road, BS23 1DD; Richard Burd, Sandcroft, TF7 4AD; Paul Robson, Park Lane, TS1 3LQ; Phil Irish, Ragleth Gardens, SY2 5RB; Gordon Hayward, Brackendale Grove, LU3 2LT; Asim Mohammed Sadig, Greenbank Avenue, B55 6EP.

NAME THAT DROID COMPETITION

MIKRO-GEN wanted you to give a name to Gadgi's mate for the follow up to *SHADOWFIRE*. Some of the ideas were extraordinary to say the least but after much deliberation it was decided the top prize of a ghetto blaster would go to Andrew Leahey. His neighbours had better buy some ear plugs pronto.

WINNERS
Andrew Leahey, Schofield Street, WN7 4HT (a ghetto blaster). The runners up receive the complete works of MIKRO—GEN. They are: Stephen Miller, Old Station Road, IP19 8JJ; John Schollcar, Coronation Road, GL2 3DA; David Kilby, Herberton Bungalows, Wilts; Ashley Cotter-Cairns, Langley Hill Close, WD4 9HB; Gavin Khanna, St. Anhope Avenue, N3 3LX; Richard Budd, Osborne Close, GU34 1QT; P Newman, Clevedon Road, BS23 1DD; Frazer Worley, Mill St, Scotland; A Simter, Grove Lane, B91 3AQ; Eric Wilson, Eagles Lane, CB6 2TG.

WINNER OF THE REVENGE COMPETITION

This had to be the worst competition to date for my good friend, *El Retardo*. Old Crumbly decided it was time for revenge, after being the target of a lot of verbal and written aggro, and he invited readers to dress up the wimp in the most outrageous outfit possible. It turned out to be a very funny exercise indeed and *El Retardo* is still sulking if the truth be known.

The lucky winner of a pony trecking holiday for two was Charles H M Joynson, of Lime Tree Grove, BD11 2BJ. The runners up, who each receive a copy of the game, *DOOMDARK'S REVENGE*, are as follows:-

RUNNERS UP
David Kilby, Herbeton Bungalow, Wilts; Nicholas Johnson, Storeton Rd, L43 5TN; Scott Logan, Carlisle Rd, ML11 9RA Matthew Blakesley-Spicer, Tennyson Avenue, S64 0AX; Stuart McCartney, East Street, WS1 3LJ; Ian Whitehead, Harvey Gardens, SE7 8AJ; Marc Bichener, Sudeley Walk, MK41 8HS; Matthew Burton, Boultree Road, B72 1DW; Chris Beltrami, Henryson Road, London; Wayne East, Chertsey Rise, SG2 9JF; Mark Richard Long, Blunts Hau Road, CM8 1ER; Andrew Webster, Mount Pleasant, NG12 5EG; Amtix Reader, Derry Lane, LS29 8NJ; G J Thurtle, Derwent Drive, S30 4QJ; H Breach, Roman's Road, SO23 9QR; Daniel Singerman, Highfield Crescent, SO2 1SF; Heath Steward, Orchard Villas, B61 9HN; Daryl Ward, Newbury Close, LE8 2JJ; Haran Siva, Franks Avenue, KT3 5DD; Mr D Clewley, Cedar Close, WD6 2ED; Richard Budd, Osborne Close, GU34 1QT; Christian Watts, Orchard Close, NE39 1EQ; Mike L Hunt, Maybank Road, DY2 0AE; Mark White, Hillview Estate, Eire; M James, Kensington Close, Shropshire.

THE PCW SHOW COMPETITION

This competition saw the AMTIX! faithful having to find 11 words associated with the world of computing in exchange for the chance to win a free ticket to the PCW Show at Olympia in London, courtesy of the Big M. They also received a programme for the show and an AMTIX! Cap.

WINNERS
Graham Turner, Epping, CM16 5DW; M Sutton, Swansea, SA3 3EU; Christopher Wootton, Wolverhampton, WV8 2DT; Jim Dolan, Ely, CB6 3BH; Wayne Yeomans, Walsall, WS2 7ER; Robert Shee, Maidstone, ME14 4AZ; Christopher John Davies, Nottingham, NG5 1FX; Ian Berriman, Hull, HU10 8LB; Charles Vaid, Barnet, EN5 1JL; Kirk Fitzsimon, Norman's Bay, BN24 6QG.

THE MILK RACE SPECIAL BICYCLE COMPETITION

Back in May, (gosh is it that far back?) we asked readers to search a wordsquare and find the names of AMTIX! writers and contributors. It was not a difficult competition and we had lots and lots of correct entries but on a lucky dip basis it was decided to award the superb 10 speed racing cycle to Mr M Hands of Eaton on Tern, Shropshire. Your bicycle will be on its way to you very soon!

RUNNERS UP
Mr P D King, Kenilworth Road, SO1 2BP; John Birdsey, Hoo Marina, ME3 9LE; C Collins, Shepherds Close, WR9 1DH; Mr J Jagger, Adrenont Drive, TA1 4JE; Martin O'Brien, Stone Barn Lane, WA7 2PQ; Mr R A Mathie, The Link, LU5 5HQ; J Smith, Honeysuckle Road, SO2 3BW; Mr L Garrard, North Lane, LN4 4LO; Mr G Man, Wellsmoor , PO14 4PY; Matthew Todd, Lindop Road, WA15 9DZ.

THE OH SO PRETTY MINION COMPETITION

Readers will recall that recently **Level 9** have teamed up with **Rainbird** and the marriage appears to have some stunniung offspring in the pipeline. To celebrate the event Uncle Tony Rainbird came up with a gem of an idea for a super competition. He invited readers to design an item of adornment for the humble, underpaid competition minion, in other words ME!! There were some very interesting creations and after much pondering it was decided the first prize, a £100 voucher to be spent at any H Samuel jewellers, would go to one Angus Lee, and Uncle Tony grtaciously agreed to donate four £25 vouchers to the very close runners-up.

WINNERS
Overall winner, Angus Lee, Rosemount Square, AB2 4UB, who receives a £100 voucher for H Samuels; four £25 vouchers for H Samuels, go to: Nicholas Johnson, Storeton Road, L43 5TN; Simon Gibbs, Green Lane, S18 6LW; David Kilby, Herberton Bungalows, Wilts; Julian Broderick, Henry Smith's Terrace, TS4 0PB; The next 10 runners up each get a copy of *Jewels of Darkness*. They are; Stephen Humphries, Boode Croft, L28 4EW; Lee Close, Congleton Avenue, M14 7BX; Andrew Gladwell, Alexandra Road, BH14 9EW; Paul Robson, Park Lane, TS1 3LQ; Toby Howlett, Boston Avenue, SS26JH; Lee Nearly, Haining Road, EH49 6LH; S J Allibone, Sheridan Road, BN14 8ET; James Phillips, High Croft, WS9 8XL; Edward Price, Vancouver Drive, NPT 3QS; Adrian Dalton, The Cherwell, NN11 4QL.

A MIXED BAG IN THIS ISSUE

Having made it back from the very chaotic PCW Show, and finding that we only had a week left to write the magazine, I got to work on the range of software that we now had. The producers having no good streaks in them at all, kept saying "come to the show and collect the goodies" which where almost never in sight, but thankfully everything finally fell into place. (38 seconds before the printers closed). But, to the technically minded among you, most of the 'goodies' were well worth the wait.

Another copier has hit the market, this one coming from Romantic Robot. This, as with the *Mirage Imager* is designed to stop software piracy but this one also remembers the colours that were being used at the time of the backing up. For those 664/464 owners with extra memory but no way of running those big CP/M plus programs, Silicon Systems have a new large *TPA system* that knocks a few spots off CP/M plus. For the programmers there's a book that reads like Amstrad's firmware manual should have done, a review of *Tomahawk* for the Joyce and, from our far away Techno—Teacher, a review of *Money Manager* for the CPC's.

Right now for the moment you have all been waiting for, ta daaaaa, (eh! what, get that trumpet player out of here), yes AMTIX! is now on Prestel, just drop us a line on *105845851*. It could be about anything, adventure hints and tips, your games votes, or even a quick tech letter. Did anyone notice that Techlet is missing. Why, you may ask? Quite simply I only received three letters and they have already been answered in past issues. But to that person who pointed out that *Prospell* is available on the 464 and 664, please remember that I reviewed the 8256/8512 and 6128 version which is much superior to the other version, and anyway a certain person who shall remain nameless (CLUE: Lady Diana ********) walked off with most of the old tech stuff some time back — well at least it disappeared when he went on to pastures new!

TONY CLARKE

THIS MUSIC MASTER UTILITY IS OUT OF TUNE

Music program utilities can be either sensational or a flop. The latest effort from VANGUARD LEISURE LIMITED is the latter

Music programs have always been popular with the smaller software houses, and can range greatly in scope. **Rainbird** (definitely a large software house) produced the best yet for the Amstrad with their *Advanced Music System*, unfortunately the latest system from **Vanguard Leisure Ltd** is one of the worst. The program is mainly in BASIC with the major pieces of machine code being used to generate the very bad loading screen, which takes an age to complete but spares you, for 15 seconds, the horrors of the main program.

Once loaded you are requested to press DEL and TAB to load a piece of music, or any key to get into the main program, but as the program contained no facility for cataloguing the disk or tape I was deemed to reset the machine and check the disk for demos. What a surprise I didn't think, no demos, looks like no-one at **Vanguard** wanted to produce anything for it.

After another long wait I got into the program. The first option is to change between the six different instruments that are available, though they sound very much alike, very organish, except for the last of the six which warbles away like a fire bell. Six percussion effects are also available by pressing keys 4 to 9 on the numeric key pad, none of which sound much like any sort of drum I have heard, all are just white noise with different volume effects.

Happily there are some redeeming features; you can lay down a background track first and then add music with another two channels over the top afterwards, though this means becoming very familiar with the layout of the keys. You must also be able to keep up with what you recorded before.

Three options can be selected for the number of foreground channels available, from one to three, with the background track taking up the remaining channels.

The keyboard is laid out in much the same way as other music programs that try to simulate a real piano keyboard, but in this case there are two. The top keyboard plays the lower notes and the bottom plays the higher. The two keyboards are shown graphically on the screen with each note being shown up on the respective key when it is used.

Really it's just another run-of-the-mill music program that once again assumes no musical knowledge, and is probably written by a programmer with no musical knowledge. Never mind, maybe next time, but at £12.95 for the tape version and £15.95 for the disk I can't see many being sold.



A PERSONAL ACCOUNTING PACKAGE FOR MICRO OWNERS

Our Education expert, PAUL FIDDLER, examines Money Manager from Connect Systems and Advance Software Promotions

The owner of a small business must sigh at the end of a working day when he is then faced with a long session after hours, 'doing the books'. Many problems arise when newcomers to the business world find that they have neglected to set up an accounting system that meets their needs and enables them to present a set of books for accounting and tax purposes — not forgetting VAT of course.

There are also many individuals who like to keep their personal finances in order and would like to be able to check their income and expenditure whenever they felt like it — it avoids embarassment and saves having to cross the road when passing the bank too.

The solution to the problem is often to buy an accounting package for a small micro, which can cost almost as much as the computer and comes with backup in the form of the telephone number of the software company. You pay for this privilege — and it's fine if you are lonely and like making long distance telephone calls, you can even start a whole new column on a page of your accounting package to pay for them. But no amount of telephone calls will help if your accounting software, or its documentation, is dubious in the first place.

A 24 PAGE MANUAL

The documentation in the form of a 24 page manual is well produced and friendly, the contents page is set out in such a way that any program function is easy to find without the need for an index or reference section.

There are limitations with such a compact package, as the program and data reside in memory together only about 100 entries per month can be made — modest by most business systems. If long descriptions are used for each account, memory consumption increases — a thoughtful touch is a 'memory low' warning beep with the advice to save current data. Careful editing to replace long descriptions by abbreviations will save memory, alternatively, a system could be split into two files.

As a personal accounting package or as an introduction to business systems it would be hard to find better value than *Money Manager* at its asking price of £29.95. Many more expensive business programs are less friendly in use and have fewer features.

Money Manager is published by **Connect Systems** and **Advance Software Promotions** — £29.95 on disk for Amstrad CPC and PCW computers.

A NEAT PROGRAM

A neat accounting program with adequate documentation which will cope with the needs of the small business owner and for those who like to organise their personal finances so that they can always look their bank manager in the eye should therefore be welcome.

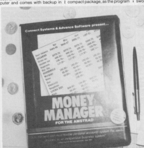
Money Manager from **Connect Systems** and **Advance Software Promotions** for the CPC and PCW machines could prove useful to many seeking to bring a measure of order to their financial dealings. The program runs with a one-drive system so there is little danger of spraining a wrist by constantly swopping and flipping disks — CPC owners with one disk drive will not feel left out either.

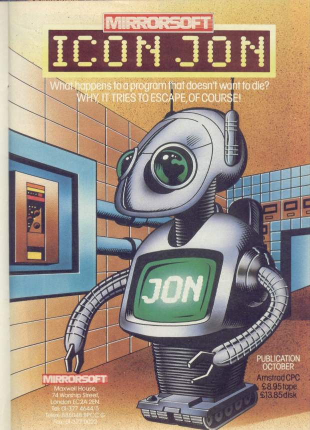
Money Manager runs without CP/M (apart from making a working copy on disk) so you can load and get straight into one of the two sample data files — Business or Personal Data. The documentation sensibly suggests that you work through these before attempting anything too ambitious.

The menu for the personal data file has 14 options:- You can add or edit entries, sort entries into date order, ask for statements — for a specific account, VAT, summary by month or account, and for statistics showing the number of entries, balance and cash flow for a particular account. The codes you have used to set up the account references can be changed from this menu and, of course, data can be searched. A Bar chart can be called up to display three categories of entry on the PCW or four on the CPC, the CPC will also produce a pie chart of up to ten categories and print this out if you have a screen dump utility.

When setting up a business file you will be asked for which month and year the file is to start, the account number, any references you require (e g cheque or invoice numbers), a description of up to 18 characters, the amount of the transaction and VAT if applicable. Like the personal data file you are given a good deal of flexibility, entries can be edited and standing orders added. It is also possible to postpone entries if a transaction has not been cleared by the bank. Print-outs produced on an Epson compatible printer are nicely spaced, clear and easy to understand.






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A UTILITY FOR BUDDING AMSTRAD ARTISTS

Rainbird's Advanced Music System was a huge success. Now Tony Clarke examine the latest product from them, an art studio utility

Following hot on the heels of their *Advanced Music System* **Rainbird** have come up with *The OCP Art Studio*. This full feature program even has an **AMX Mouse** option, though I think the omission of Lightpen control it a major disadvantage. The joystick or cursor control is somewhat difficult and stops you from creating artistic swirls and flourishes as only 8 directions are supported, but a slight help, is that the longer you hold one of the directions, and are not at the same time printing something on the screen, the more the cursor speeds up. When first run the *Art Studio* presents you with a command menu and pointer, all controls being accessed by the WIMP's system (windows icons mice and pointers) as pioneered by Xerox. The first thing to do is set the mode of operation, mode 1 being the default, though mode 0, multi-colour porky pixel mode, is not supported. **OCP** probably thought it of no use (or maybe they are out to get more money off us when the *Deluxe Art Studio* comes out.

The palette of four colours, two in mode 2, is user definable through a type of slide system, moving the sliders left and right sets the selected colour, with flashing colours being set by moving the colours twin slider on the left hand side of the screen to the second colour, moving the right hand one will move both sliders together. The flash rates are also selectable through twin sliders at the bottom of the screen. The only omission seems to be a dynamic palette which would allow you to switch colours in a sequence and so have water fall or flowing effects. The CPC has 25 text lines but 3 of these are permanently taken up by the option line at the top of the screen, so a system is included so that the screen can be scrolled down by 3 lines so that the top of the screen can be worked upon.

PRINT OPTION

The print option allows not only a selectable printer option but also the ability to set your own printer specifications and so use any printer you happen to have. There is also an aspect ratio option which sets the ratio of pixels in the X direction to the Y. When trying to use the present options for the DMP2000 we found the print to be somewhat pathetic, the printer was fine and so we can only deduce that there is some major thing that we are missing, even though we had the finished manual. Each colour on the printer is meant to be shown up as a different stipple but instead only colour 1 was shown up as black. The printed pages can be justified left and right or centred to set their position on the paper, just like a word processor.

The file option allows you to load or save a picture, though the colours used are not saved along with the picture unless the palette option has been set, and therefore must be set every time the picture is loaded into the machine whether it be into the *Art Studio* or into the machine from BASIC, if the palette option has been specified, however, this is not required. Also any screen that you wish to edit, that was not created using the *Art Studio* must have been saved, with the offset of the screen being in zero. In other words the screen must not have been scrolled in any direction under hardware. Either drive A or B can be selected and files erased although they cannot





The program gets a **GOLDEN SCREWDRIVER** award.

be renamed without loading them into the studio or saving them out under a different name.

Full instructions are given on how to load pictures into the machine from BASIC. The PAINT option gives you a selection of airbrush, Pen or Paint brush. The airbrush simulates the function of a real airbrush by splattering the paint about the screen inside a movable circular area of selectable size. The Pen option gives you a selection of pens from the normal line type to fountain pen effects. These can be used for lettering when using the mouse but is very difficult to control otherwise. The brush option gives you circular and square brushes of varying sizes as well as some characters such as the **Rainbird** symbol and stars. Brushes can be defined in any shape, so smiley faces and stripey brushes are easy to do. The Miscellaneous option covers such things as changing the screen mode, which incidentally does not clear the screen but changes the screen into a form where it can be viewed in another mode, clear the screen change the input device be it keyboard, joystick or mouse. The Windows option allows you to set up a window of the pictures and move, rescale or even smear it all over the place, sort of a multi colour brush.

WINDOW SELECTION

When the window is selected it is possible to clear it after moving or just copy the picture else where. The Fill command is one of the most useful options, allowing you to fill in selected bounded areas of the screen with either solid colour or even textures, from a selection of 32, or create your own. The normal fill command has two types, solid fill and over fill. The solid fill is a normal fill command that fills a bounded area where the boundary could be anything. The over fill command is subtlely different and fills an area bounded by a foreground colour, this is quite useful at times but if you are not careful then it is possible that the whole screen may become filled with colour. Luckily the UNDO function is available at all times and can be called after making any operation that have been made so that error can be removed very easily. The Texture Wash is also very useful for putting a texture where a solid colour is as it replaces any selected colour with a chosen texture. The magnify option is very useful for entering fine detail in individual pixels.

The screen may be magnified 2, 4, or 8 times on any selection of the screen. On selecting the option you have to move a magnifying glass icon to the point that you wish to magnify. Once this is done you are not just restricted to the area that you selected but can also move the magnified window to any part of the screen and therefore work on any part. The Text option will let you put text on any part of the screen that you wish, be it double or treble height and/or width, Bold or italic or even rotated or down the screen. You are not just restricted to the Amstrad's built in font but can select from any of the nine fonts that are available on disk, from computer type print to fat characters. Though if you think that there are not enough fonts then you may define your own using the built in font editor. The fonts once built up may then saved to disk for use at a later sitting.

I wish that we had more time to do a complete review of this product but the train is waiting for the colour pages. The actual options are so varied and complex that the only real way to appreciate it is to go out and buy one for yourself. The abilities of the package are so varied that anyone with a small amount of artistic ability should be able to create some competent pictures. I await the deluxe version of this package, ready some time next year, and am fairly confident that it will a best seller, as this one is sure to be. The *Art Studio 6128* is available from any computer shop at price £19.95.


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THE
Anatomy OF THE
CPC's



INTRODUCING A REALLY GOOD REFERENCE BOOK FOR CPCS

There are many books on the market promising you a 'Complete Guide to the Amstrad', most of which are a re—write of the manual, but the second book from **First Press** titled *The Anatomy of the CPC's* is the best reference book for the Amstrad range yet, comprising of a complete firmware manual, a full ROM disassembly and full information on the internal hardware of the CPC's using the 6128 for its examples but clearly showing up any differences between the two machines.

The book starts rightly enough by giving you the memory map of the 6128, and explaining the way memory is allocated and expansion ROMS scanned, and generally showing you how the system sets itself up at power up. The main integrated circuits are then covered in order of importance.

First the Z80A is covered, starting with a quick history of the chip along with its parent the 8080, did you know the Z80 is eleven years old this year, and an explanation is given why the processor is compatible with all the 8080 hardware and IC's. A quick run down is then made of all the features of the Z80A, such as the low voltage needed to operate it of 5 volts instead of the more usual 5 and 12 volts, and how the processor can run at up to 8 mega hertz (pretty quick). All this is very good but what if you wanted to produce hardware for the Amstrad that was connected by the expansion port directly to the Z80A?

Well even this is catered for with a complete list of all the pin outs and how to use them properly. Ok so you are no good at electronics and still think chips are English French Fries, not to worry. The explanations are quite clear and with a little background reading you should be able to pick up what is going on even if you still aren't able to build anything. After a quick look at the way the Z80A uses its 18 registers the book moves on to the Gate Array, a clever little chip that controls just about all timing and signal generation for the other ICs and the way the ROMS and RAM are used. This chip, by using paging techniques, allows you to use the extra memory on the 128 machines and chose which ROMS are currently available, including the sharing of space between ROM and RAM. If instead of the gate array this system were replaced by an equivalent using TTL gates,(don't worry about the jargon), then the size of the Amstrads' circuit board would more than double.

SECRET CUSTOM CHIP

Being a custom chip Amstrad themselves are very secretive about its internal workings but **First Publishing** were not put off and promptly pulled the thing apart, metaphorically speaking, and gave us a full insight into how it does what it does. The first thing that strikes you about the chip is that there are three different versions, for each on the 464/664 and 6128 respectively. The first version on the 464 ran very hot and so required a large aluminium plate to dissipate heat, just in case the chip could overheat Amstrad changed it on the 664, and finally, due to the need for memory banking facilities, the 6128 has yet another version.

A fairly detailed description of the chip is given but 464/664 owners have to take note of the changes that are listed throughout the text. Next on the cards is probably the most important chip for screen effects. The 6845 CRTC (see previous issue) is fully explained, including how to use the lightpen registers. It seemed strange to me that AMSTRAD themselves didn't produce a proper lightpen, only that silly strobe effect pen that was much too slow. Knowing the pin outs of this chip is not enough as it also contains 18 registers that allow manipulation of the screen. These are accessed through outputs from the Z80A.

Next comes the RAM, this is fairly easy to control as much of the manipulation is done by the Z80A. The I/O chip then follows, 8255, which controls all input and output and the transfer of data between the Z80A and all other ICs, and select the type of monitor, 50 or 60 Hertz. The programmable sound generator, covered next, is much more than just a means for making sound effects, as the people who built it also thought

that at some stage keyboards and joysticks would need to be added. This, along with the 8 bit parallel port, make it very versatile for input/output uses. In the Amstrad it is used to generate the noises for the save routine. The FDC or floppy disc (DISK!!) controller is fairly well documented with diagrams of the pin outs. Now for a quick nag about the slow C64 disk drive. With this information it is very easy to set up very none standard formats that often hit the market, as well as an insight into the compatability of other disk sizes such as 5 1/4 and 3 1/2.

THE BOOK'S USEFULNESS

The real usefulness of the book is shown in the next chapter, with a complete list of all the firmware routines as well as the addresses of all the routines in the ROM. Instead of the more usual disassembly the book merely gives a list of the addresses, what they do, and how to use them, though if you want to delve into the machine itself there is a type in MONITOR at the end of the book which will allow you to also access the ROMS. Not only are routines covered in full but also many examples are included, a text and graphics printer dump for one. One of the hardest aspects of the CPC to get acquainted with are the Operating system interrupts which allow as many interrupt routines to be handled as you want, at any of three speeds from once every 300th of a second to 1/50 of a second (or every frame flyback).

This means that an entire program could be written in interrupts with the main loop in the program being just a jump back on itself. The way 'Event Blocks', as they are called, are set up is fully explained and should be easy enough to understand for any competent machine code programmer, though if this is not the case then you are likely to be very confused at the end of the chapter.

The rest of the book is dedicated to the Kernal or main body of the CPC which controls all basic functions of the machine. Using these in a logical sequence you have all the building blocks for the control programs within the machine. Such things as Cursor and Screen control are covered as well as the use of the floating point routines. As with all books of this nature, a little brain work is required on the part of the reader but generally it is easy to follow. The main omission is an index, but with so much being covered the index is likely to be as long as the book itself. If you want a full insight into the CPC's then buy this book instead of the Firmware manual from AMSTRAD, a lot more is covered and the text is generally much clearer and easy to understand.

THE ANATOMY OF THE CPC'S is available from any good book shop at £14.95.

INTRODUCING MULTIFACE TWO, THE LATEST COPYING UTILITY FOR ARNOLD OWNERS

Richard Eddy checks out Romantic Robot's solution of tape to disk transfer

Romantic Robot are wildly known for their copying utilities, the first that sprung to light was *Trans Express* which was the first efficient tape copier for the Spectrum. Since then the company has gone from strength to strength, hardware wise, as well as producing the smash hit game, *Wriggler*.

The *Multiface* was originally for the Spectrum but they obviously recognised that there was a sufficient market of Amstrad owners jsut crying out for such a utility. The beauty of the *Multiface* is it's ability to back up any program at anytime, meaning that a game can be paused at any stage, simply by pressing the red Stop button, and then use the Save routine to store the program, so when reloaded the game begins at the point it was saved at, whether it be at the beginning or at the end of a program — unlike other tape to disk utilities, any 64k program will be fully loaded in a maximum of twenty seconds. One of the appealing parts of the *Multiface* is it's additional 8K RAM and ROM expansion onboard, this is helpful as it does not take up any of the Amstrad's memory and will never overwrite any part of a program which may already reside in memory. Having the extra ROM means that the utilities need no additional software to become operational, everything is tucked very neatly away inside it's little box.

The utilities are all menu driven complete with prompts and one key selection which saves all that unnecessary hassle of performing complex tasks — all you need to do is to push the magic button and select the desired option from the menu. Once the activate button has been pressed the screen will return to mode one without clearing the screen, which may result in currupting the screen picture temporarily, and then option menu will be displayed at the bottom. However, when the program is re—loaded everything will be restored, including both the colour and the sound which other copiers often fail to do. There is also no chance of the keyboard locking — this doobrie can cope with everything. The lines that the menu overwrites are not lost, but saved to the internal memory. Going through the options in order we begin with the Return function which simply returns you from the utility back to the saved game.

SAVE FUNCTION

Having selected the Save command you are requested to enter a suitable file name, or it is possible to simply press enter to input RUN automatically. There are three possible medias on which to save your program, tape, hypertape (2000 baud), and Disk. It is also possible to save a complete program or merely a particular screen, either way the program will be compacted to take less room and load quicker. Screens are left intact, because if compacted they would need an expansion program. They are, however, saved with a special routine to restore any special parameters as they were before saving.

IMPORTANT NOTE!

AMTIX! does not condone software piracy, the reason this review was conducted was because the *Multiface Two* is a useful utility, and should be restricted to making back—up copies. The programs copied with *Multiface Two* can only be reloaded when the device is present.

CLEAR

This selection is only available on the 6128. It clears the second 64k bank for more effective compression, and can be used at anytime — either before or after, or loading but not with programs longer than 64k as blocks four to seven will be filled with zeroes.

JUMP

This enables you to jump to a different address, either in the Amstrad ROM or RAM or in the Multiface 8K RAM.

TOOL

This option gives way to a sub menu, consisting of a useful little toolkit. From here you can PEEK and POKE addresses, open a window to show 56 bytes at a time in both hex and ASCII display and edit them with a full screen editor. The hex option will toggle between hex and decimal desplay. REG will display Z80 registers. PAL will allow you to alter the colours previously selected; especially useful when playing a colour game on a green screen as you can change the colours to make the display more defined and clearer. INF shows the current status of the computer with crucial information on the CRT video controller and system variables.

The **Romantic Robot** team have obviously spent a great deal of time perfecting this product as there are no glaring bugs nor are there any small bugs and it proves to be the most efficient and user friendly back—up utility, that I have seen for some time and it is well up with the standard of quality we have come to expect from **Romantic Robot**. At £46.95 it is excellent value for money and is compatible with the CPC464, CPC664 and CPC6128 machines.

It receives a GOLDEN SCREWDRIVER Award.

GIVING CHASE TO THE PRIDE OF LUTON

Our man from the smoke, PAUL SHERREARD, travels northwards to interview the people behind PRIDE UTILITIES

After a brief drive up the M1 I soon arrived at the premises of **Pride Utilities** in Luton. My welcome was brief and to the point. A note attached to the door said 'Meet you in the Pub!' During our wet lunch I was introduced to two of the members of **Pride** — Dave and Steve, both of whom have been involved in the company from the beginning, and who both appear to spend a lot of time in pubs — as it appears that this is the place where most of the decisions are made.

Back at the **Pride** offices and over the first of many cups of coffee, the history of the company, its progress, and its many projects were discussed. However, the first questions had to be how did **Pride** start? Why the name **Pride**? and what brand of coffee were we drinking?

Although **Pride** started not very long ago, they are already a major force in the utilities market. In fact they have been in business supplying utilities for the Amstrad computers ever since the launch of the first CPC464. And they became a limited company in April of this year. They started supplying utilities for the Amstrad so early on in its history that Steve thinks they have one of the very first CPC's produced. Could this be a collectors item in years to come?

The name **Pride** comes from their first release *Prowler Pack* of which the utility *Tomcat* was a part. So by lateral thinking *Prowler*, *Tomcat*, Lion, Pride of Lions — **Pride**!

COMPUTER CLUB START

They started (this will warm the cockles of our editor's heart) from a computer club and the only computers they had were Sinclairs, with no software to help. So Steve, who quite modestly admits is totally self-taught, wrote their software. Once again in the pub, (I said they were always in the pub!) they and a couple of others met after a computer club meeting and decided that they had some good marketable software — and so **Pride Utilities** was formed.

As Steve explained 'In the early days of the Amstrad (and this goes for any newly released computer) there was no software around (or very little and poor quality at that) so the only alternative was to write your own.' But how about now, I asked? 'Now there is too much, especially games, which offers so much distraction that people today really cannot be bothered to teach themselves and write their own software, so they buy off the shelf utilities or whatever will do the job for them.'

So, in **Pride** jumped with both feet (or should it be paws??), offering what people wanted, and this was, and still is, **Pride**'s motto. They will offer what the public wants and not what they (**Pride** or any other company) say the public wants.

I asked, why the move to the Amstrad when they had started on Sinclairs? 'It was a very close thing' explained Dave. 'Choosing between the newly released Amstrad and the Sinclair QL. It was only the fact that Amstrad delivered the goods on time (or at least always released by the published date) that we put all our efforts into the Amstrad Computers. And like thousands of others, we were very excited and impressed by what Amstrad had released.'

So, what have **Pride** been doing since the early days? Well, two of the original four from the pub discussion dropped out leaving Steve and Dave, and their wives, Debbie and Linda, as directors of the company, and now an office manager, Iain Christie, who copes with all the things an office manager does, is with them. Apparently, he speaks fluent French, which is a good thing because **Pride** have made a very big impact on the European market, especially France. In fact all of **Pride**'s utilities sell better abroad than they do here.

So the name was chosen, the Amstrad computer was their choice, where were they going to work? Well, it really was the classic example of how a computer company used to start. First of all it moved into Steve's bedroom where all the programming was done, with Dave handling all the mail order and advertising side of things from his own home. As things progressed and grew much bigger it was necessary to expand. This time they moved into a garage and then when even more space was needed, a proper office was found — they moved to where they are now!

BETTER SALES ABROAD

I asked Steve why he thought that utilities sold much better abroad than they do here. His answer was quite a shock! 'Here in Britain it is very much a games orientated business. People are more interested in playing the latest *Jet Set Willy* clone than they are in using their computer for more serious or interesting use. If you go abroad they are more interested in the actual use and workings of the micro. So they need more utilities.'

Dave and Steve at work

OK so apart from the obvious financial gain from moving into the foreign market, why did they initially start into Europe? Over to Steve again. 'Like everything that happens to **Pride** — it just happens. They heard about our products and they liked the quality and standard of the software and packaging. So obviously we put our products into their market. We also help with all the conversions necessary to put out our utilities in another language. But most important, again it was because of our policy, we gave the public what they wanted!'

Is this really the case I asked, or is it just a case of marketing? Dave's turn to answer: 'Definitely not. We are not businessmen and we never really have been. We are just members of the public and computer users, so we are always in touch with the public, and they tell us what they need and we try and fulfill that need. We do not want to get involved in the business side of things too much, because if we did, then we would loose that closeness that we have with the public. We would become too involved with finance, advertising, buying, etc, than with filling a need or gap with writing software. That's another reason why we have Iain as an office manager.'

This can actually be proved. After the amazing success with *Transmat* — the tape to disk transfer — and the follow-up help sheets (for those difficult programs) called *Transmit Information Exchange*,or TIE for short, Steve was so involved with dealing with inquiries and compiling the TIE fact-sheets that his software writ-

ing virtually stopped. Now since a company called **Goldmark Systems** (who are a kind of through the post computer club) has taken over TIE, **Pride** has released five new titles. Explained Dave '**Pride** is a software house, not a support team, so if the support, we give, cannot be maintained then we will find someone else to take it over, and so give it the necessary time and commitment that the public demands. Because, as we have already said, we rely so much upon the feedback that we get from the public — we need that contact in order to update or release new software, so if we become too involved in other things then this cannot happen.'

Added Steve — 'In fact if you read the back of the label of *Oddjob* the disk tool-kit utility it says; 'A complete disk utility with all the programs YOU have told us you wanted!' It really did happen like that!

FEEDBACK FROM PUBLIC

Which is again why we rely on the feedback from the public. It's not just a marketing exercise to sell our products. 'Earlier on we mentioned the utility *Tomcat* — what's happened to that? I asked. 'Well' said Dave 'we no longer sell that utility any more. In fact, we now have nothing to do with tape-to-tape utilities.' Why not I asked? 'It's no longer necessary. In the early days of tape software there was little or no back-up from the software houses so if you were sold a tape that went duff — it was tough! So it was provident to take your own copies as a reserve.'

Steve added: 'Also there were so many loading problems with the 464 (heads out of alignment, bad tapes etc) that all software had to go out at the slower loading speeds. Which is why we bought out our tape copier utilities to enable you to load at four times the speed. In fact we can categorically say that we bought out the first tape rever-upper!'

So what about tape-to-tape utilities now? Dave's turn to reply:

Part of the Hardware used in programming (Spot AMTIX!)

'They really are no longer needed. Companies and distributors now are very conscious of the quality of their product, and if any of them become duff then they will replace the product free of charge — they have a lifetime guarantee. So now, the only people who really want tape-to-tape copiers are those that want to break the copyrights and make copies for their friends. That's why we no longer sell tape-to-tape utilities.'

Over to Steve: 'As regards software on tape, we do sell a few, but now practically all our orders are for disks and most will run only on disks, plus a few ROMS. That's the way the market is going.'

So that's what's been happening in the past, what about the future I asked? It was Dave's turn to reply: 'Well, we did consider selling a few games, Steve can write the odd game as well you know — in fact he won second place in the 1984 Cambridge Awards for his game *Warzone* — but we thought the diversification would be too much, so we stuck to utilities. We do, however, now look at other people's software with a view to marketing it, an example is one of our latest releases *SuperSprites*. So, if any of your readers think they have some software we may be interested in please feel free to contact us to discuss it further!'

Continued Dave: 'Also we have plans to start our own distribution company which will distribute anything — hardware, software, etc, but again this will probably have more of an impact upon the European market than here at home. There appears to be a great demand abroad for good British software at a reasonable price and so we at **Pride** will fill that need.'

SOFTWARE FOR THE JOYCE

'On top of this we are going to release in this country some high class software from France for the PCW8256 and PCW8512. For autumn and for the PC$W Show we hope to have three new titles for the PCW as well as offering to put any programme up to 16K on ROMS for the CPC. This will be a service offered through **Goldmark** who are handling this side of things. And, just to whet your appetite even more we will be doing a few neat things with ROMS and a few more really useful bits and pieces for the CPC's — but more of this at a later date!' (I tried really hard to find out more, but they wouldn't be drawn, muttering something about the competition)?

'At the present time we will continue to be offering and updating our existing stock of software — *Transmat* (the tape to disk utility), *Oddjob* (the disk utility package), *PP2* (the utility for dot-matrix printers), *Fido* (the disk organiser and database), *Supersprites* (the sprite creator and animator), *Scriptor* (the DMP1 printer utility), an 8 bit printer port etc.

Well, that's about it. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to Luton, and having a nose around **Pride**. They have brought out a lot of very useful software of which the biggest seller at the present time is *PP2* (Printer Pac), but in the long run it is *Transmat*, closely followed by *Oddjob* (the disk utility tool-kit).

If you do have any suggestions for utilities, or maybe your own software which you think could be marketable, or perhaps a problem which you would like solved — just get in touch with **Pride Utilities** — they're a great bunch of guys! You can reach them at:— Unit 14, White Hill House, 6 Union Street, Luton. Beds. Tel: 0582 411686. And **Goldmark Systems** can be contacted at 51 Comet Road, Hatfield, Herts. Tel: 07072 71529.



End of another hard day?

NOW A JOYSTICK FOR THE JOYCE

It seems that as people realise that the PCW 8256 and 8512 can also be used for less serious matters, flight simulators and the like, so a place has appeared in the market for a joystick interface. **Cascade** have obliged and brought out their new *Joycestick* (geddit). The little black box plugs into the expansion port and uses the standard ATARI D type joystick, which covers just about every joystick on the market. The package includes, for £27.95, the interface, a joystick compatible version of *Cyrus II Chess* and **Cascade**'s home brew joystick. So far the only program we have tried with it, besides the chess, is *Tomahawk* which works perfectly, even the auto fire worked! Obviously it's a worthwhile addition for your complete Joyce kit!

Not the fire alarm! That's for scale.


GREMLIN
WHATEVER WE DO..... .....WE DO IT BETTER!
Footballer of the Year
The game to answer every boyhood dream – the chance to make it to the very top of football stardom. Starting on your path to glory as a 17 year old apprentice with a Fourth Division team and only £500 and 10 goal scoring cards in your pockets, the footballing world is at your feet. Adopt the identity of a professional footballer and develop a career through the ups and downs of match days, transfer deals and injuries etc. Display your talents in Football League, E.U.F.A., F.A. and Milk Cup games and then if you're good enough the ultimate accolade of your sport, the Footballer of the Year Award.
Future Knight & Trailblazer are not available on BBC/Electron.
MSX, Spectrum 48K
£7.95
Amstrad, BBC/Electron
£9.95
C16/ +4
£6.95
Atari, CBM 64/128
£9.95
Disk
£14.95
FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR
GILBERT IN DEBUT WIN
INJURY
Future knight
Arise Sir Randolph to take up the challenge of death that has befallen the fair maid Amelia, held in the evil clutches of Spegbott the Terrible. Acting upon an inter-dimensional distress signal from the galactic cruiser SS Rustbucket, don your Omnibott Mark IV attack suit and venture forth in pursuit of your beloved's captors. Defend yourself nobly against the Berserka Security droids. Fight your way through 20 gruelling levels onto the planet's surface into Spegbott's castle where the fate of Amelia lies with the outcome of your mortal combat with the awesome Henchodroid. Is there any gallantry and bravery left in this modern day universe?
Trailblazer
Available November!
Future knight
Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd.,
Alpha House,
10 Carver Street,
Sheffield S1 4FS.
Tel: (0742) 753423
Trailblazer
Available November!



TOMAHAWK

Digital Integration, £19.95 disk

FOR YOUR JOYCE

As darkness descended on the routed troops, a new force was beginning to awaken. Slowly the monstrous death machine started, the rotors increasing speed, engines howling, radar searching for the nearest enemy. Then like some gigantic bird it rose above the earth, holding itself above the ground, suspended by some invisible force. With a whoosh and sudden turn the machine darted off into the distance dealing death to the advancing enemy.

TOMAHAWK, the amazing helicopter flight simulator has now come to the PCW range of computers, losing nothing except the sound, but making up for it with an improved display. The graphics are still of the vector type with the usual ground features such as buildings, mountains, pylons and of course the enemy in the form of tanks, gun emplacements, and helicopters, though the more passive enemies, the ground mainly, could be your downfall.

Just like the real thing you have a range of navigational and tactical instruments to help you with the mission. The TADS, target acquisition and designation system, is used to distinguish the enemy from the allied forces and gives you information on the distance of the threat as well as type. The weapons controlled by this system on the real thing swivel around to keep the target in range but here all of the fixed mount type, except the Laser Guided missiles that track the target. The Gun sights, of the crosshair type, controlling 30 millimetre machine guns firing 750 rounds per minute. The rocket sights are of the diagonal crosshair type and fire rockets up to a 4000 foot range, while the guided missiles, 8 in all, will take out anything up to 3.1 miles away, though you will gain very little in points value by using powerful weapons on soft targets such as the field guns.

The combat mode covers a range of options, first is the ground target selector which allows you to switch between the 8 possible targets in the area, the second will show up any approaching helicopters, who act just like kamikase pilots and try to ram you, firing as they go. The instructions cover such things as tactical manoeuvres for gaining the advantage in a dog fight with another helicopter, but as the other simply spins around trying to either smash into or blow you up, they are of little use, though they do add atmosphere to the game.

The little pseudo VDU near the

■ **What an improvement over all the other versions. The graphics are fast enough to give you the real feeling of flight and the handling of the helicopter is about the best you can do on a home computer. I expected more sound after seeing** Batman **on the 8256 but I suppose the warning bleeps at the right moment are adequate. The inclusion of a joystick option using JOYCESTICK interface is a great help but control using the keyboard is equally easy. All in all a good conversion, with an improved instrument layout and nice added touches such as dials as well as digital read outs.**

Anthony

centre of the screen gives you information on the vertical speed of the craft, and is complimented by a dial display to its right, TIME gives the time it will take to get to a target depending on your speed and distance from it, the distance being show underneath. The distance meter has three resolutions, the first is in miles when the distance to the target is over five miles, from 0.1 to 4.9 miles the distance has a resolution of 0.1 of a mile, and finally at less than 0.1 of a mile the distance is shown in feet.

The artificial horizon is used to tell the roll and pitch of the aircraft in fog or low cloud, the cloud base being selectible from 50 to 5000 feet. The Doppler navigation/compass gives a reading of your current heading, which may be different from the direction you are facing, and the bearing of any target,



■ ***Tomahawk* is just about the most flyable flight simulation you can get. You spend a minimum of time flying this thing, and a maximum smacking the enemy. This game really gives the feel of height and ground perspective. There's nothing quite like zinging along on the deck, flat out, guns blazing — and you'll have to if you fancy taking on the campaign scenario in ace mode. It's good to see a flight simulator of an allegedly advanced helicopter that you don't end up flying by the seat of your pants. Full marks to Darrell for the conversion, it's even better than the CPC version. The graphics are really fast. The only criticism is the sound, there ain't none, apart from the odd warning bleeper. The whole game is played in a sort of eerie silence. Another must for Joyce owners everywhere**

Lee

beacon or landing pad that you may be locked onto. In case you happen to be moving backwards or sideways then a track indicator gives you the direction of motion, if the track and heading are the same then you are flying straight forward. If you fly forward at less than 60 knots and turn using the rotor blades then the whole machine is likely to slip sideways, the track shows this up by a slight change from the heading, but this can be counter acted by use of the rudder. Over 60 knots slip is unimportant and the rudder makes little effect on the aircraft. If a flashing lightning symbol appears on the radar then an enemy aircraft is on its way, which means it would be a good idea to track it and dispose of the lurgy at the earliest possible moment.

Control over the direction of the Helicopter is by the joystick (yes there is even a joystick option) or the keyboard using the arrow keys for the cyclic control, the main steering which changes the pitch of the rotor blades, the Z and X to change the yaw of the craft using the rudder, the W and S keys to increase and decrease the throttles on both engines, and the Q and A keys to change the collective, the pitch at which the rotor blades are set in relation to the horizontal. By changing the collective the amount of lift generated by the rotors can be changed to maintain, gain or lose height. By slowly decreasing the angle of attack of the rotors with the collective, the helicopter can autogyrate, similar to gliding in a conventional aircraft, being very useful for engine off landings.

It's all very well having a simulator but what do you do once you're up there. Well instead of the more usual ''blast it when you see it'' attitude of many simulators you have a selection of four missions of varying difficulty. The first is just a training period which allows you to become accustomed to the controls of the helicopter, weapons and navigational systems. Each sector contains 8 enemy, giving a total of 1024 total blastable objects.

Mission 2 is a short combat mission in which the enemy have been confined to 4 sectors, each sector taking about 10 minutes to clear, after which you can land and be given a rating of your performance.

The third mission is the longest as you are surrounded totally by enemy forces and must liberate the entire map, not an easy task, that could take up to 20 hours to complete.

The last mission is a strategic battle for the whole map with you helping your troops as they march forward. All you have to do is look for weak spots and turn the tables on the enemy, a definite one man fight against overwhelming odds.

■ **Er, flight simulation huh?, sounds dreadfully boring — especially on a Joyce. Don't get put off by the expression, because this is one of the most atmospheric games yet on a Joyce, or any Amstrad come to that. The superbly detailed graphics of both the dashboard and the accurate animation complement the overall playability of the game marvellously. Although Joyce owners do appear to be rather lacking in software this is yet another example that dear Joyce can come up with the goods when she tries too, Tomahawk *is the ultimate in arcade simulation and this particular version certainly tops the lot.***

Richard

PRESENTATION 93%
Colourful packaging and good documentation.

GRAPHICS 91%
Amazing detail, and fast too.

SOUND 10%
Bleep

PLAYABILITY 90%
Hard to start, even harder to finish.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 94%
You'll burn some midnight oil on this one.

VALUE FOR MONEY 90%
Great value for the Joyce.

OVERALL 91%
The best version by far.

AMTIX! Accolade



THE GUARDS OF MAGOG

Prolific and respected adventure writers, Level 9 recently distributed a missive indicating that they're not too happy with some of the publicity **Incentive** have been receiving regarding *GAC*. In various reviews, *GAC* has been said to offer enough facilities to create **Level 9** type games. The Austin family's press release contains information showing the inherent superiority of their design system and highlights the limitations of **Incentive**'s product. They feel that their games are being somehow demeaned in the comparison. 'Not in the same league,' is how Pete Austin describes the product whilst admitting that it, 'may very well be a good product in its own right.'

Exactly. Nobody has suggested *GAC* is superior but whilst admitting that **Level 9**'s system is far more efficient, almost anything **Incentive** can do, *GAC* can also do. More importantly, **Incentive**'s product allows non-programmers to create games. If you want to write an adventure, where are you going to buy **Level 9**'s system? Nowhere. So what's the point in boasting about its superiority? None.

Level 9 are currently celebrating their fifth anniversary in what can only be described as a well deserved rise to success. However, even they are not perfect. For all the brilliance of their text and graphic compression and pseudo 'multi-tasking' incorporated into their games, the parser can still be found lacking. Background objects often have artificial sounding and mundane accompanying messages such as, 'Woods: that's just scenery.' Occasionally, words not understood are themselves corrupted in a game's reply. The parser and data routines are both more sophisticated and economical than *GAC* but they still err in ways *GAC* does not.

Hopefully, five years of success have not gone to the heads of **Level 9**. They are very good. But they're not perfect.

Be seeing you.

REBEL PLANET

U S Gold (Adventuresoft), £9.95 cass

This is the latest in a new series of games from **Adventuresoft UK**. Packaged in a double width cassette case, the game comes complete with fold out instruction leaflet and obligatory cassette or disk. I've seen this game before on the Amstrad's older cousin, the Spectrum. When the final version arrived on the Arnold, the two most noticeable differences were the increase in graphic quality and the speed of response. The former aspect is to be expected, but the previous version had taken some time to respond to commands whereas interaction was almost instantaneous on this one (as indeed it should be).

You play the role of an agent for the Earth based organisation SAROS (Search And Research Of Space) which is trying to break free of the grip of the expanding Arcadian Empire. You are on a mission to the planet Arcadian itself disguised as a Merchant. Once there, you must destroy the central computer that controls the minds of the enemy troops. First you must travel to two other worlds to mislead the Arcadians. Then, on arrival at the homeworld, seek out allied spies who have information on how to access the computer with a series of number codes. Simple eh? Okay, it's better than average.

The game is based on a book by Robin Waterfield which forms part of Ian Livingstone's and Steve Jackson's Fighting Fantasy series. Whether reading the book will help you with the game, I ▶



don't know. I doubt it would be much use after previous experience. The game is neatly packed in a double cassette case with a decently sized instruction leaflet so at least the background has been catered for.

Games like this never seem to have a reasonable vocabulary or parser. When the computer gave me a yes or no prompt and I typed in 'N' it said, 'You cannot go that way.' It understood 'laser' and 'sword' for laser sword but only understood 'ampoule' for analgesic ampoule. Some of the responses were a bit nonsensical as well.

Ah well. It takes some time and a very precise course of actions to stock up with supplies and tools before you land on the first planet. After that you have to keep track of your personal status (energy tablets may be carried to sustain this) and the scheduled take off time for your vessel. If you're really stuck, you can retard take off time but this feature may only be used once, so be careful.

It's a fairly standard effort and though I mentioned the parser before, at least it now has AND, THEN and IN usage (which does prove useful). The graphics are pleasantly drawn as well so those who desire piccies in their games should not be disappointed. Those who are more interested in the flexibility of the plot and interactive capability of the game may be.

There are some good points. Using a time limit works well. This determines the amount of time you have to explore each planet and adds a bit of pace to the setting which the adventure benefits from greatly. The location description is always visible on the screen which cuts out the necessity to re-type 'look' every time you want to inspect the surroundings and the screen display itself is very neat. There's very little atmosphere though. The game depends too heavily on its graphics for my liking. All this comes down to taste. Yer pays yer Zorkmids and takes yer choice. I can think of plenty of other games I'd rather have.

Atmosphere	52%
Plot	60%
Interaction	54%
Lastability	49%
Value For Money	53%
Overall	52%

VERA CRUZ

Infogrames, £9.95 cassette, £14.95 disk

Now this one has taken a while to arrive. When I last saw it, it was finished but distinctly French, making the playability somewhat limited. With the English arm of Infogrames operational, a translated version of the game has been prepared. And an interesting game it is too. You have just taken up the post of Detective Sergeant at Saint Etienne (how pleasantly different to have a European backdrop) when you have to take over a case quickly being dubbed by the press as the Vera Cruz Affair.

Vera Cruz is, or rather was, a prostitute. She will carry out her clandestine business no more however, as at the start of the game, her blood soaked body lies behind the entrance to an apartment in the Forest block of flats. And it's in this scene that you make your first entrance. The screen displays her prostrate figure revealed in the light from an open door. Around her are several observable objects.

Following instructions that appear at the top of the screen, you control a cursor which can be fixed on an item and then be made to zoom in to add detail, the idea being that you are taking photos of the scene. This is one of the most attractive parts of the game. Zoom in on a packet of cigarettes and you'll be presented with a wonderfully detailed pack of twenty Rothmans. A close up of an ash tray reveals a Camel cigarette with lipstick on it. The detail really is remarkable.

So notes are made. This game comes down to analysis of evidence. All the immediate evidence suggests a suicide on the part of the unfortunate prostitute. You have to prove it was a murder, collect enough evidence to catch the murderer and, of course, bring him (or her) in. This is where a little bit of French pride enters the proceedings. The French, apparently, have a very sophisticated police computer network called the Diamond Network which can be accessed in the second part of the game. It's basically a telex machine, but one capable of checking police records from all over the country. You can compare



items of evidence with known suspects, check alibis, contact other branches of the law enforcement agencies and almost anything else a budding Sherlock Holmes could ask for.

That clears one problem. Interaction is very straightforward. Getting the best out of Diamond takes practice but it doesn't sink to the level of 'guess the word'. This leads to a different problem. Atmosphere. Games usually fall into two categories: those with atmosphere and those without. Vera Cruz is fundamentally different from the conventional text or text/graphic adventures, so the atmosphere tends to be there one moment and not the next. It's a strange feeling that will leave some people unsatisfied. One minute you're totally involved; the next, you're just going through the motions. Weird.

The game relies heavily and quite unashamedly on its high quality presentation. If you stick close to the main aim, this is no real problem. Unfortunately, there's no real way to allow yourself to become sidetracked and wander into any kind of subplot. The very fact that the game is sectioned off into phases means you're in for narrow gauge, linear progression (and who wants that, I hear you cry).

One area where the game's greatest strongpoint (the way it looks) lets it down is on the rear cover of the now trendy double cassette inlay. Any blurb that ends, 'Let's enter the sordid world of detectives, pimps and prostitutes . . . ' has got to be a contender for the bad taste of the year award.

Despite some reservations, I liked it a lot. It has style, originality, pace and a touch of sophistication. My only real worry is how long it will take to solve. While I can't claim to have made a great deal of progress during preparation for this review, I have this nagging feeling there isn't much further to go. On the other hand, this could be down to good plot design. I'll put my head on the block (again) and suggest you add this one to your collection. Could be a sign of things to come.

Atmosphere	83%
Plot	84%
Interaction	90%
Lastability	74%
Value for money	84%
Overall	83%

AFTER SHOCK

Interceptor, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk (PCW £17.95 disk)

Three Mile Island meets Chernobyl in this latest Irwin Allen type disaster epic from **Interceptor Software**. The plot is quite coherent up to the beginning of the game. You play the part of a key member of a team that designed and built the city's reactor and a bad week starts with notification of failure of the plant's backup cooling system. Immediately, an investigation is begun.

The military then explode a nuclear warhead in an underground test, deep in the desert to the east of the city. The week starts to get worse. Shock waves hit the city inflicting only superficial damage. The next day, the shocks still have not subsided and people flee their homes in panic. When Friday comes, it brings an earthquake of unprecedented destructive power with it. The city is in ruins. What's worse, the nuclear plant is now losing pressure in the main cooling system and, you guessed it, the backup unit is still not working. The repair crew exit stage left, rather rapidly, and leave you with a demanding quest to follow. Repair the plant while there is still time.

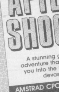
If there's one thing **Interceptor** must be masters of, it's graphics. Their games have, in the past, been criticised for being simplistic and unsophisticated but the graphics are stunning. On the CPC version, Terry Greer is responsible for this feast for the eyes. On the PCW, Robin Chapman puts his talents to use. Both artists have created some excellent screens. On the CPC version, these included some subtle animation such as oil spilling from an overturned tanker, smoke rising in black plumes or a particularly atmospheric shot of a hand sticking out of the rubble that opens and closes a few times before it finally stops . . .

I have only seen static shots from the PCW version. However, when graphics are as good as these, I can see their appeal in an adventure. It's said that a picture paints a thousand words and in the case of **Interceptor**, it's probably true. Unfortunately, valuable memory is eaten up as a consequence. The result is, I'm afraid, a game of 'guess the vocabulary.' Any game that understands 'Take' but not 'Get' should be viewed with caution. All, Except, Ramsave and a a variety of other words used increasingly in adventures are absent from this game. Some of the syntax required to achieve an object is distinctly inflexible and contrived, often slowing the game down.

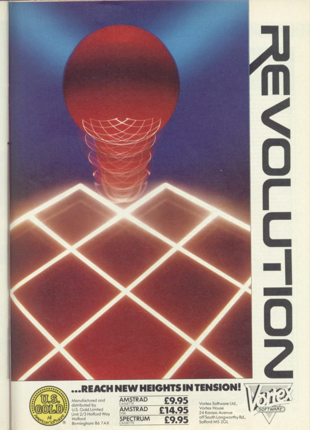
There are other faults. I don't like games that kill you off without any chance of avoiding death. This happened on at least one occasion whilst playing *After Shock*. In one location (I won't say which), the ceiling is important. On examination you are told why. Yet only a room away, if the ceiling is examined, you are given the reply, 'I can't see the ceiling here.' It's nonsensical. How much of this is author David Banner's fault must be open to debate. I've never seen any of his games before (but then again, **Interceptor** have never given me anything to review before) and it's possible that he has to work in what is already a flawed design system. Certainly his plot must take some credit for avoiding dwarfs, axes and other cliched memorabilia. Nuclear disasters have been done before but they still have some life (or should that be death?) in them.

After Shock isn't that bad a game. In some ways it's an unfortunate throwback but in others it can be commended. The choice is yours. It costs a little more than it's worth. And it isn't easy.

Atmosphere	85%
Plot	75%
Interaction	51%
Lastability	61%
Value for money	53%
Overall	55%






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TAKING A SHUFTIE AT THE SHOW

This year they had it in for me. 'Send 'im on the public days,' they cried from their hallowed halls. And so it was that a leprechaun in London once more, knew fear. Wall to wall chaos. Metropolitan macaroni and Homo Sap sauce. You could smell the adrenalin dressing. Three days of this is enough to shorten anyone's life (not to mention the legs).

We had good weather — or bad depending on how you look at it. The sun shone okay, but that turned Olympia into the world's largest silicon greenhouse. It didn't make the going easy.

But in all that madness were many gems. Take **Interceptor**, who had a stand opposite our own. They were displaying a whole range of graphic adventures (including old favourites at reduced prices) but the focal point of their display was *After Shock*, newly released on both the CPC and PCW ranges. For the first time, I had something to review from **Interceptor**. Alas, when I returned to the office, the PCW version failed to load. I'm working on it.

Then there was **Level 9**. Their stand displayed their work over the years on different machines, but there was little new to look at (*Jewels of Darkness* was being heavily pushed on the **Rainbird** stand).

Of course, a main point of interest lay with the Amstrad PC. There are already a massive number of good adventure games available in PC format and the fact that Amstrad's compatible is fitted with GEM in ROM and 512K RAM, should encourage the development of WIMP based adventures such as *The Fourth Protocol* only bigger and better (with luck).

Infocom were back with new adventures to keep you busy through the winter months. In *Leather Goddesses of Phobos*, you play the role of an average male or female human (which sex is decided when you go to the toilet at the start of the game). Inexplicably, you are kidnapped by aliens and taken to Phobos, the largest of the two moons of Mars. There you discover the Leather Goddesses. For some reason, they plan to turn Earth into their latest sexual playground. It is your task to prevent them (though why you should want to is another matter entirely).

Unusually for **Infocom**, the game uses three levels of play, though these are not difficulty levels as such. They are Tame, Suggestive and Lewd. Each level uses naughtier (more atmospheric?) text than the last. Some of the language becomes more explicit as well as providing more detailed descriptive passages. Even then there are limits of course. One scene is merely described as using a lot of lubricant and a yak. The rest of the scene is for you to imagine . . .

Before long, you find yourself in more traditional settings, wandering the ruins and canals of Mars in true John Carter fashion. The sexual overtones are less obtrusive here. Coming across the throne of King Mitre (otherwise known as Midas) to discover that rather than change things to gold, he turned them to forty-five degree angles for some fetish satisfaction, proves that both Meretzky's humour and the spicy nature of the game remain deeply inbedded in the program. In fact, an interplanetary tour takes place, littered with heated distractions.

When you discover that the goddesses want you for experimentation, even you agree that sexual freedom can go too far and so, accompanied by your sidekick, you set about trying to make an anti-leather goddesses machine to save Earth from the coming invasion. Other characters in the game have their sex decided by your own choice at the beginning of the game.

Packaging is always an important way of adding atmosphere in an **Infocom** game, and some original ideas have been used including a scratch 'n' sniff card and 3D colour comic showing off the 'finer points' of the goddesses. The first in **Infocom**'s new comedy series, *The Leather Goddesses of Phobos* is sure to make its mark. It does wonders for your whiskers, especially at £24.95!

Not on show (but due for Amstrad release) was *Trinity* by Brian Moriarty. As part of the **Interactive Fiction Plus** range, it requires 128K machines to run. It's a strange and rather wistful fantasy requiring you, as the central character to manipulate time (through other dimensions) in order to change the history surrounding the development of the nuclear bomb. interestingly, you die right at the start of the game during the first stages of the Third World War. I'll let you know more when the finished version arrives.

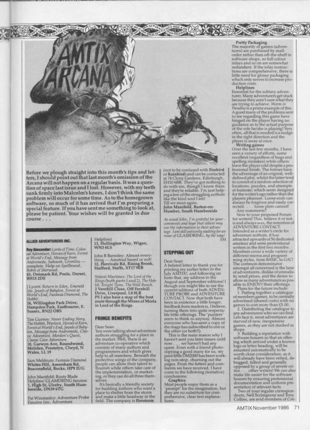
A slightly more traditional fantasy product called *Moonmist*, was on display. Apart from the fact that it's set in Cornwall and can run on any machine in the range, I'm afraid the whole thing is a mystery. All will be revealed in due course, I'm sure.

There were enough Amstrads around generally to make the point that the range was in no immediate risk and that new products would continue to flow thick and fast. Good.

And thank you to everyone who came to the stand. I wasn't around very much (there were theories that I crumbled to dust when subjected to sunlight) but it was fun meeting a few people. It appears that my readership has reached the plural. Here's to next year.



A mysterious **Activision** official parades before the **Infocom** display. Who can it be?



Before we plough straight into this month's tips and letters, I should point out that last month's omission of the Arcana will not happen on a regular basis. It was a question of space last issue and I lost. However, with my teeth sunk firmly into Malcolm's knees, I don't think the same problem will occur for some time. As to the homegrown software, so much of it has arrived that I'm preparing a special feature. If you have sent me something to look at, please be patient. Your wishes will be granted in due course . . .

ALLIED ADVENTURERS INC.

Roy Alexander: *Lords of Time, Colossal Adventure, Heroes of Karn, Forest at World's End, Message from Andromeda, Subsunk, Gremlins* — complete. Help on *Spellbound, Robin of Sherwood*.
43, Denmark Rd, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2DE

J Lycett: *Return to Eden, Emerald Isle, Jewels of Babylon, Forest at World's End, Fantasia Diamond, The Hobbit*.
24, Willingdon Park Drive, Hampden Park, Eastbourne, E. Sussex, BN22 OBS

Tim Gurney: *Never Ending Story, The Hobbit, Warlord, Heroes of Karn, Forest at World's End, Jewels of Babylon, Message from Andromeda, Classic Adventure, Mordon's Quest, Classic Cave Adventure*.
10, Garwyn Ave, Roundwood, Meliden, Prestatyn, Clwyd, N Wales, LL 19

Sam Meldrum: *Fantasia Diamond*.
Whites Hill, Amersham Rd, Beaconsfield, Bucks, HP9 2UG

John Manifold: Rusty Blade Helpline/ GLAMDRING fanzine.
1, High St, Ulceby, South Humberside, DN39 6TG

Pat Winstanley: Adventure Probe Fanzine (inc. Adventure Helpline)
13, Hollington Way, Wigan, WN3 6LS

John R Barnsley: Almost everything — Amstrad based or not!
32, Herrivale Rd, Rising Brook, Stafford, Staffs, ST17 9EB

Simon Martinez: *The Lord of the Rings* (both parts 1 and 2), *The Hobbit, Knight Tyme, The Wild Bunch*.
2 Vernhill Close, Off Fernhill Drive, Liverpool, L8 8LB
PS I also have a map of the best route through the Mines of Moria in Lord of the Rings.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Dear Sean
You were talking about adventure authors struggling for a place in the market. Well, there is an adventure co-operative which consists of many authors and programmers and which gives help to all members. Beneath the protective wings of the company, people can allow their talent to flourish while others take care of the implementation, or marketing, or they can do all three themselves.

It's basically a friendly society for budding authors who want a place to shelter from the storm and make a little headway in the field. The company is **Firestorm** (not to be confused with **Firebird** or **Rainbird**) and can be contacted at 74 Clony Gardens, Edinburgh, EH10 6BR. They've got nothing to do with me, though I know them and they're reliable. I'm just helping a few of the struggling authors like the kind soul I am!
Till we meet again.
John Manifold, Barton-on-Humber, South Humberside

As usual John, I'm grateful for your comments and hope that others may use the information to their advantage. I am still patiently waiting for an issue of GLAMDRING, *by the way!*
SM

STEPPING OUT

Dear Sean
A belated letter to thank you for printing my earlier letter in the July AMTIX!, and following on from that, my address in the August and September editions! I though you might like to see the current editions of both ADVENTURE PROBE and ADVENTURE CONTACT. Now that both have been in existence a little longer, feedback from readers is, I believe, turning them into quite respectable little offerings. The 'punters' seem to think so anyway. Almost everyone who has seen a copy of the mags has subscribed to one or the other (or both!!).

This is the main reason why I haven't sent you later issues until now . . . we haven't had any spare. Even with a friend photocopying a good many for us, my poor little DM2000 has been working non-stop, churning out the pages. From the letters and comments we have received, I have come to the following (tentative) conclusions:

Graphics
Most people enjoy them as a 'prompt' for the imagination, but they are no substitute for comprehensive, clear text explanations.

Pretty Packaging
The majority of games (adventures) are purchased by mail-order rather than off-the-shelf in software shops, so full colour inlays and so on are somewhat redundant. If the inlay instructions are comprehensive, there is little need for glossy packaging which only serves to increase production costs.

Helplines
Essential for the solitary adventurer. Many adventurers get stuck because they aren't sure what they are trying to achieve. *Worm in Paradise* is a prime example of this. A good many of the problems sent to me regarding this game have hinged on the player having no guidance as to the actual purpose of the role he/she is playing! Very often, all that is needed is a nudge in the right direction and the player is away at once.

Writing games
Over the last few months, I have seen a variety of efforts, some excellent (regardless of bugs and spelling mistakes) while others leave the player cold despite a professional finish. The former have the advantage of an original, well-defined plot, whilst the latter tend to consist of a random selection of locations, puzzles, and attempts at humour, which seem designed for the writer's ego rather than the players pleasure. Loose ends can always be forgiven and easily corrected. . . . loose plots cannot!

Any comments?

Now to your proposed Forum for writers! This, believe it or not, is and always was, the intention of ADVENTURE CONTACT. Intended as a writer's circle for adventure authors, it has attracted upwards of 50 dedicated amateur and semi-professional writers in the first two months. Members cover a wide variety of different micros and programming styles, from BASIC to GAC! The common denominator amongst all concerned is the lane of adventurers, dislike of unrealistic retail prices, and the desire to allow as many adventurers as possible to ENJOY!! their offerings.

Plans for the future include:

1. Putting together a catalogue of members games, to be centrally advertised (shared costs) with no games to cost more than £5.00.
2. Distributing the catalogue to any adventurers who we can find. Lets face it, most adventurers are starved of new, inexpensive games, as they are not stocked in shops.
3. Building a reputation with software houses so that an offering which arrived under a known logo or letter heading, will be assumed automatically to be worth close consideration, as it will already have been vetted, debugged, tidied and generally opposed by a group of severe critics . . . other writers! We can also make life easier for the software houses by ensuring professional documentation and uniform presentation of relevant facts.

Two of your regular correspondents, Neil Scrimgeour and Tony Collins, are avid members of *Con-*



tact and contribute a good deal to the smooth and efficient running of the group. There are also several Spectrum, Commodore, BBC, Dragon owners with identical aims and dedication.

Although AMTIX! is only dedicated to one micro, writing and marketing adventures follows the same principle however the writing is achieved and whatever micro the game ultimately appears on. Contact between different micro owners also opens the way for inexpensive conversion — particularly with *Quill* and GAC.

Contact also acts as an information exchange for novices and experts alike. By the way, **Incentive** (Ian Andrew) thoroughly approves of the group and is backing us! I haven't yet had ANY response from **Gilsoft**. . . . wonder why? Several *Quill*ers have commented on the same difficulty of communication!

It seems to me that advertising is growing in popularity, yet software houses generally are wary of taking the plunge. . . . why? Tried and tested arcade products sell well, but from reviews it is evident that a general boredom and malaise is drifting over their empire. Ever more sophisticated games with unvarying plots make for nothing but monotony. . . . perhaps adventurers are the natural heirs. Lets face it — unlimited possibilities for plot coupled with tremendous flexibility of style and layout ought to ensure that the days of sameness in adventurers is well and truly over. I think I'd better stop now. I could go on all day/week/month/year on this topic.

Anyway . . . let me know if there is anything I can do to help your Forum, or anything else for that matter.

Pat Winstanley, Wigan

Long letters (that make it past my hatchet) deserve long replies. I think your comments are an accurate assessment of the current market trends and I'm especially glad to hear that CONTACT *is doing so well. Having seen the later issues, may I add that the quality of the content seems to be improving all the time and you seem to have struck the ideal balance within the journal.*

I've already had my winge about software houses being reticent to produce anything that deviates from the norm. The situation does not seem to be improving. In a way, the software houses are incestuous. While my admiration for **Infocom** *remains undented, if they can bring out an essentially clichéd game like* Moonmist *and get away with it, it encourages other, less imaginative, software houses to produce dross. I suppose the old adage about it not being important what you do, so much as the way you do it, is true here. Unfortunately, too many pure fantasy games are of a substandard quality.*

My own philosophy is that in computer games of all kinds, we are witnessing the birth of an art form. Only when we have far more powerful computers than those currently available will we get 'true' adventure games (read Dream Park *by Larry Niven and Steven Barnes). However, the groundwork is being done here — on computers like the Amstrad. The technologists may be using bigger machines but the artists just aren't getting the backing. Home micros, being more limited than the latest Cray models, impose restrictions on the author. No bad thing. It encourages tight stories and tight programming.*

Software houses could and should take note of your proposals and conclusions. An independent body giving fledgling authors and their games a chance is an excellent idea. If things do progress and become successful, your only danger will be possible attempts at manipulation from some of the software houses. Isn't this where we came in?
SM

PLUG FOR A PRICE

Dear Sean
First, thanks for writing about my club in AMTIX! I've had a few enquiries and I'm happy to say I've begun work on a project for an Arnold owner. It is called, *Teacher Trouble* and although it is still in a development stage, it's coming along quite quickly.

The plot is simple so far, but it's going to be a tongue in cheek game concerning a group of aliens taking over the schools in England and making the children become thick, so they can have a future full-scale invasion. The original storyline and work was sent to me by a 'schoolboy' called Ian Saunders and the work he sent was quite good.

I am also working on the follow up to *Nythyhel*, called *The Wooden Box*. It's a bit sketchy so far, but it will be situated in the islands of the West Indies and will be involving Voodoo. I've had to shelve the federation project, simply because its going to be so large. It will probably become a disk game (when I get a disk drive and the GAC plus).

The second reason for writing, is to send you the full solution to the *Price of Magik* from **Level 9**. It is in the same form as the other solutions I've sent you and I hope you find it useful.

Tony Collins, Bromford, Birmingham

Thanks. I'm sure you have just become a very popular person. However, I'll have to use your full solution next month as we just ain't got the space!
SM

GETTING ON UNDER WATER

Dear SM
I am writing to help people who have brought **Firebird**'s *Seabase Delta*. The new game is slightly difficult. So here are a few tips:

Type in VCZN KLXPVGH on the dead body to find the travel permit. Travel as far as possible along the tube track then leave the car by typing IVNLEV HVZG then OVZEV XZI. Find the gas bottle and the diving suit and type ZGGZXS. Now you will be able to go to the sea via the airlock at the station. Find the Bubble gum and go to the lift. Type FK until the lift button blows up. Type XSVD TFN then type HGRXP. Now you will be able to carry on going up one floor. Go MLIGS twice and take the loaded speargun. Also on this level in a bureau there is a pen. Take this and then go down the lift and find the flippers. Now go into the sea, URIV TFM and UROO KVM.

Find the auto-clerk on the 1st floor, via the lift, and type VCZN ZFGL then RMHVIG XZIW then HRTM ULIN and take the card. Now get into the tube car and travel one station only. Leave the tube and go South. DVZI UORKKVIH and go to the table and take the key. Travel in the car back to whence you came and find the lift that doesn't work on the ground floor. The lift has a floor panel so FMOLXP KZMVO, and down the lift shaft is a disk.

So far that's as far as I've got, so happy adventuring.

David Smith, Camber Sands, E Sussex

I've had a fair few requests for this game so David, you have just earned yourself £20 worth of free software. Aunt Aggie will be sending you a voucher soon. Aren't we benign?
SM

ADVENTURER ANONYMOUS

Dear AMTIX
Here are a couple of tips for *Lord of the Rings*. First of all get the XZMWOV HGFY from Michial Delvin. When you get to Bree, knock on the door and say your name is FMWVISROO. When you enter Bree, go HLFGS through the red door and get some food from the stores. Then go DVHG through the tudor door. When you meet Strider, give him GSV IRMT. Then Strider will go outside. When you go outside, go into the Black Inn. You will see three black riders sitting down then simply say three times 'PROO YOZXP IRWVIH'. When Strider says, 'Follow me' do just that.

When you are on the top of the hill where the bird comes to Strider, get the ring back from Strider. Then when you get back on to the East highway go VZHG, then go MLIGS. WILK IRMT on the ground then go back HLFGS to the highway. Then three black riders will enter. Repeat the process used before until all the Black Riders are eliminated Then go MLIGS and TVT IRMT. Then go back to the highway and keep going VZHG until the end of part one of the game.

PART TWO

Go MLIGS and you will come across a pack pony. It will follow you. Now go MLIGSDVHG and you will come across a white stallion. Get on the horse and say SLIHV, TL HLFGS. Go VZHG across the river. The Black Riders will chase you: keep going until you reach the other side — the Black Riders will be washed away. Then go back for the others. TL VZHG until you reach Rivendell. When you go to Rivendell, make sure the pack pony is with you.

The next day, when you leave Rivendell, Elrond will leave you some cake in the pack on the pony. TL HLFGS. Do not go over the misty blue mountains as you will get killed for sure. Instead go HLFGSVZHG then VZHG until you come to the outline of a door. Earlier on take the cakes out of the pack which is on the pony otherwise the pony runs away with all the cakes.

Tentacles will come out of the water and grab you. Say PROO GVMGZXOVH and all the others that joined you in Rivendell will fight off the monster. Then light the candle and say WLLI UIVMW. The door will then open, Send Gandalf. Once inside, go up the stairs behind him. Keep sending Gandalf in front of you all the time. When you reach the room with the head on the wall, GFIM the Eagle's head. This opens up another door. When you find the room with a book and a statue inside, TVG YLLP and IVZW it. Then go through the small door or the Orcs will get you. Go down the stairs and wait for Gandalf. Keep going over the bridge until you get outside then go VZHG.

Now I am stuck myself. Don't forget to blow out the candle once outside.

Well, what can I say? Tips like these deserve a software prize but how? If the sender of the tips would like to get in touch with me, I'll sort something out. Otherwise, somebody's effort will undoubtedly go unrewarded. And it's not even as if we're meanies. Now, just in case somebody is thinking of pulling a fast one on me (not that you would, of course), the sender of these tips made a point at the end of his letter about him and this game. So remind me. That way, I'll know it's you. Please remember to always send your full name and address with any letter or tips. You might be lucky. . . .
SM

Well, believe it or not, that's all there is for this issue. I know — it ought to go on forever but too much of a good thing spoils you. If this is your first visit to these pages, sorry about the gobbledigook but it's really quite simple. The alphabet has just been reversed so people don't see bits they would rather figure out for themselves. If you have any tips, maps or views on adventuring, send them to: AMTIX! ARCANA, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB. Have fun.

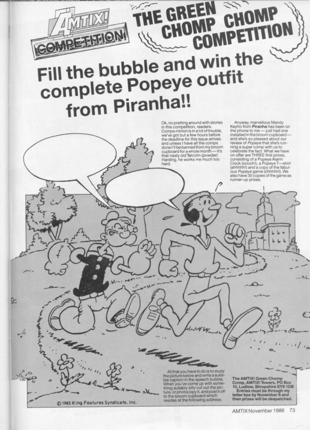
AMTIX! COMPETITION

THE GREEN CHOMP CHOMP COMPETITION

Fill the bubble and win the complete Popeye outfit from Piranha!!

Ok, no pratting around with stories in this competition, readers. Comps minion is in a lot of trouble, we've got but a few hours before the deadline for this issue arrives and unless I have all the comps done I'll be banned from my broom cupboard for a whole month — it's that nasty old Talcolm (powder) Harding, he works me much too hard.

Anyway, marvellous Mandy Keyho from **Piranha** has been on the phone to me — just had one installed in the broom cupboard — and she's so pleased about our review of *Popeye* that she's running a super comp with us to celebrate the fact. What we have on offer are THREE first prizes, consisting of a Popeye Alarm Clock (ooooh!), a Popeye T—shirt (ahhhhh!) and a copy of the fabulous *Popeye* game (ohhhhh!). We also have 30 copies of the game as runner-up prizes.



All that you have to do is to study the picture below and write a suitable caption in the speech bubble. When you've come up with something suitably silly cut out the picture, or photocopy it, and post it off to the broom cupboard which resides at the following address:

The AMTIX! Green Chomp Comp, AMTIX! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB

Entries must be through my letter box by November 6 and then prizes will be despatched.



POSTER OFFER, NEWSFIELD, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB
POSTER

MIKRO GEN INTRODUCE A NIP IN THE AIR

Straight back from the first day at the PCW show and my feet are aching, my head is spinning and I'm clutching a copy of **Frost Byte**, Mikro Gen's latest release. The game features a definite new cutie who goes by the name of *Hickey*, who resembles one of those slinking springs. The game is set within the deep ice caverns of the planet **Cosmia** — a planet of frozen wastes, *Hickey* is the last of the free Keezers, a strange race of beings, unfortunately his poor little spring like friends have been captured and locked up by the ever—so—evil nasties who also reside in the caverns. Now, these ghoulish monsters aren't too happy about *Hickey* sproinging around in their caves and are out to do their best to defeat the springy one. *Hickey* must make his way, to the best of his ability, through the treacherous caves in search of his caged mates and in a majestic fit of determination set all five of them free.

To aid him on his journey, ammunition for destroying various alien forms can be found scattered around the caverns, once found they must be picked up and used when necessary. When in possession of any ammo *Hickey* fires in the direction he is facing; horizontal while he is bent and vertical while he is standing upright. *Hickey* is also capable of using three objects to extend his movement capabilities. These consist of small coloured diamond shaped 'sweeties' which *Hickey* will be only too happy to gobble up. Each one performs a specific function; a red sweet allows him to move with more spring in his step (sic), picking a blue one makes him jump higher and a green one allows him to fall further. To use *Hickey* to the best of your ability you will have to learn how he can be best controlled while under the influence of these special 'sweeties' — all sounds a bit dodgey to me.

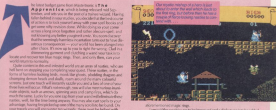
To help you keep track of *Hickey*'s progress there is a helpful status chart which, apart from the normal indication of lives, ammo, score — which is displayed as if on an abacus, also shows *Hickey*'s **Twang** level — this is the time remaining before the last of the springy one's friends and swallowed up by the mutant snow nasties.

Graphically the game owes a lot to the company's previous big hit, **Equinox**, using well defined bright sprites with absolutely masses of colour. From what I've seen from the preview it looks like it's on the way to being a biggie and could well make up for their temporary abberation with **Stainless Steel**.

RICHARD EDDY

ARE YOU A RING DINGER FOR SORCERY?

The latest budget game from Mastertronic is **The Apprentice**, which is being released mid September, and sets you in the post of a trainee wizard. Having fallen behind in your studies, you decide that the best course of action is to lock yourself away with your spell books and get some nifty revision done. Whilst doing so your come across a long since forgotten and rather obscure spell, and not knowing any better you give it a wiz. You soon discover that the seemingly harmless incantation turns out to have disastrous consequences — your world has been plunged into utter chaos. It's now up to you to right the wrong. Clad in a shimmering garment and clutching a wand your task is to locate and recover ten blue magic rings. Then, and only then, can your world return to normality.



Our mystic mishap of a hero is just about to enter the well which leads to the first ring, but before then he has a couple of fierce looking nasties to contend with. . . .

Quite content in this evil infested world are an array of nasties, who are hell bent on stopping you completing your quest. These nasties, in the forms of harmless looking birds, monk like ghosts, plodding dragons and chomping demon heads and skulls, roam around the many colourful screens. Just one touch will instantly sazzle you and a loss of one of your three lives will occur. If that's not enough, you will also meet various inanimate objects, such as arrows, spinning axes and camp fires, which do much the same. Lucky for you one zap from your wand will eliminate these nasties, well, for the time being anyway. You may also cast spells to your advantage, having first picked up one of the many scrolls to be found. On your travels you will encounter ten wizards, these must be bribed with chests full of treasure and the like, which can be found conveniently lying around. Your bribe will then entice the wizard in question to cast a spell which will in turn give you access to hidden screens which contain the aforementioned magic rings.

I am told the graphics are to be improved and a dinky tune is to be added. All I can say is that **The Apprentice** looks set to be another winner in the Mastertronic range of budget games.

MASSIMO VALDUCCI



SCOOBY DOO WHERE ARE YOU?

Go get them ghosties and earn yourself a Scooby Snack!

Scooby Dooby Doooooooo!, where are you? On the old Amstrad, that's where — at last! It must be, oooo let me see, a good twelve months since it was first advertised and has since earned a reputation somewhat akin to **Street Hawk**. Problems began when the Scooby programming team ran out of memory for their original idea, which was for it to be the first interactive cartoon adventure. After several other problems Elite Systems handed the programming over to Gargoyle Games who transformed it into a biff and bash game, but still retained the emphasis on large cartoon style graphics. The version we've seen is a nearly complete one with everything ready, all that is remaining is for it to be tweaked to make it slightly easier on the first couple of levels.

The game, subtitled **The Castle Mystery**, has a scenario which is typical of the cartoon series. The team, Shaggy, Freddy, Thelma and the tarty one — Wilma, we think, have gone out for a spin in the flower power style Mystery mobile which, in traditional style, breaks down just outside a run down old castle that is infested with all kinds of hideous nasties (Nothing original here folks!). Concealed below the castle is a laboratory where the evil, and undoubtedly mad, professor resides. Now, let's face it, this bunch of kids are pretty stupid; would you enter the lab with a mad professor in it and ask to borrow his phone to ring the breakdown service? Na you wouldn't, would you? They did, and now have been put through the decomposer ray and can be found in small bottles scattered throughout the castle.

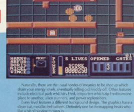
So where does loveable ol' Scooby come into all this, well, while they were being decomposed, Scooby was fast asleep, after a particularly heavy Scooby snack, in the back of the Mystery mobile. He enters the Castle in search of his friends and this is where his adventuring begins.

The Castle is displayed as several levels with ladders and staircases interconnecting them, the place is littered with doors and secret passages, none of which Scooby can enter, but ghosts and spooks come out of at a rate of knots. These can be easily dealt with by bashing them on the nose, sort of **Way Of The Exploding Paw**. On later levels Scooby will come across other forms of nasties which may either float, bounce or fly, the flying ones can be avoided by crouching — Scooby covers his head with his paws and sticks his rear in the air, very dainty.

Scooby Doo will be released from Elite in mid November, a firm promise this time round, and from what we've seen it looks sure to be a good 'un.

RICHARD EDDY

SAVING THE PULSATORS FROM A FATE WORSE THAN DEATH



Pulsator is a new maze game from a previously unheard of bunch called Softeam which has come marching out of the mists near Cardiff and is being released soon by Martech.

Freddy the pulsator must save his fellow pulsators from a fate worse than death. Harry, Arfur, Boris, Nigel and Vince have been locked up in a labyrinth, one to each of the five levels of the catacombs. Freddy must release them by first finding a key to unlock the cell and then freeing them from the evil clutches.

It's more than just a maze game, it is more of a logical puzzle. The maze contains various doors, which are opened and closed by passing over sensor pads. Only if the right pads are activated at the right time can you progress through the maze.

Naturally, there are the usual hordes of meanies to be shot up which drain your energy levels, eventually killing old Freddy off. Other features include electrical pads which fry Fred, teleporters which zip Fred from one place to another, alien stunners, and power replenishers.

Every level features a different background design. The graphics have a clean cut, metallic feel to them. Definitely one for the mapping freaks who like a bit of blasting thrown in.

LEE PADDON



BRAVING THE DRAGON'S LAIR

Long ago in a magical time *King Aethelred* ruled a happy and peaceful kingdom. His kingdom had many treasures but its greatest, by far, was his only child, the very lovely *Princess Daphne*. Brave knights and handsome princes came from afar to try and woo her for she was a maiden of beauty and grace. Some laid vast riches at her feet and pleaded for her hand but she always refused them all. After all, her heart had been given to another, *Dirk the Daring*, the king's champion and his bravest knight!

One day an evil dragon called *Singe*, who ruled a shadowed land, appeared in Aethelred's kingdom and made a takeover bid for the latter's kingdom and subjects. Aethelred naturally told him to push off so the dragon kidnapped *Princess Daphne* and imprisoned her in a crystal sphere in the damp and dreadful dungeons beneath his enchanted castle. He then sent an ultimatum to her father, 'Relinquish your kingdom before sunset or your daughter will perish!'

Basically that is the scenario for **Dragon's Lair**, the latest game from Liverpool based, Software Projects. You are the hero, *Dirk the Daring*, who sets out for the enchanted castle to rescue his sweetheart. You have to gain access to the dungeons below *Singe*'s castle before time runs out . . .

Based on a highly successful arcade game, it is the first game to use the laser disc concept.

The first obstacle you encounter is a **Falling Disk** which you must ride to the dungeons beneath the castle, but beware, for one of Singe's most fearsome creatures, the Air-Genie, guards the shaft through which you must travel. You then enter **Skull Hallway**, a room haunted with horrible spectres from your most horrifying nightmares. A keen sword comes in most handy at this stage of the game.

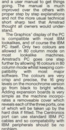
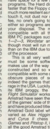
Next you have to tackle the **Burning Ropes**, where flames roar up from a fiery pit below you and your only hope here is to rise above the heat. If you have survived this far the next obstacle is *Singe*'s armoury, his **Weapon's Room**. An evil spell protects this room from intruders and you must battle your way through. By now you are almost halfway through your ordeal and the next test is the **Ramps and Giddy Goons**, a series of ramps, topped with enchanted ice, which lead to the next perilous level of dungeons.

If you are a determined hero the next phase of your quest is the **Tentacle Room**. This is *Singe*'s laboratory, where he carries out his evil experiments. By now you're a little exhausted but more dangers await you including a **Second Disk** which takes you down to the last dungeon level. Next comes the deadliest foe of all, the **Deadly Checkerboard**. The game is deadly for the prize is your life. You have to battle against *Singe*'s champion, the *Phantom Knight*, on a board that is suspended in mid air. If you complete this stage all you have to do is cross a perilous ledge to reach the magical sword, slay the dragon, and rescue *Daphne* from her crystal tomb. What a challenge!

MALCOLM HARDING


AMSTRAD'S NEW MICRO, THE PC1
Our technical man, TONY CLARKE, hitches to London on the morning mail train to gloat over Alan Sugar's latest money spinner
Da-daaa-daaaaa!
Dan-dan-dan-dan!
Daaaaaaaaaaaa!
PC

1512, ARRIVES WITH A FANFARE


Amid much speculation and after a fairly hyped launch, green man from Gamma Three and all, Amstrad's new PC finally hits the market, and though not new in design, the machine really is a revelation to your pocket rather than technology. The lead model will retail through the standards outlets of **Currys**, **Dixons**, **Laskeys** etc, at the miserly sum of £399 plus VAT.

The machine's goodies include a 8Mhz 8086 processor, a 512k memory expandible to 640k, a full function 85 key keyboard, a paper white anti-glare monitor, colour monitor compatibility (16 grey levels on the monochrome monitor), a 5¼ inch 360k Disc Drive, a real time clock with battery back up, RS232c serial interface, a 34 way Centronics Parallel interface, a mouse with two select buttons, 3 expansion ports, a joystick port in the keyboard, a tilt and swivel ability for the monitor and built in speaker with volume control.

With all this, on the software side, comes **Microsoft**'s MSDOS 3.2 operating system, **Digital Research**'s *DOS plus operating system*, **D R**'s GEM *Graphics Environment Manager*, **D.I**'s *GEM Desktop* and *GEM paint*, *Locomotive Basic 2* operating under *GEM*, and a user manual to get things going. The manual is much improved over the others with proper step by step explanations and not the more usual technical short sharp text that Amstrad thought all owners would understand.

The Graphics' display of the PC is compatible with most IBM lookalikes, and of course the IBM PC itself. Only two colours are allowed in 80 column mode on most lookalike machines. Amstrad's PC goes one step further by allowing 16 colours in 80 column mode whilst keeping compatibility with most major software. The colours are very crisp and precise, the 16 grey levels on the monochrome version go from black to bright white. Adding expansion boards is very simple as the machine incorporates a removeable cover which reveals each of the three ports, one of which will be taken up by the hard disk if fitted. The Centronics port can use standard IBM PC cables and so compatability with IBM peripherals should be no problem.

The Hard Disk, which comes as an optional extra, can be 10 or 20 megabytes, enough to store around three million words and still have space for a few application programs. The Hard disk is much faster that the Floppy drive and is much more resilient as nothing can touch it, not dust nor spilled coffee, no one's going to borrow it either so programs are always at your disposal. The machine is compatible with all the famous IBM PC packages such as *Lotus 1—2—3*, *Wordstar* and *dBASE*, though most will run much faster than on the IBM due to the speed of the processor.

This is all very well but there must be some software which makes use of the way the IBM is constructed and so will not be compatible with some of the more obscure pieces of software or indeed the games that are all the rage in the USA. Luckily my favourite IBM proggy, the **Microsoft** *Flight Simulator* works very well. Amstrad have seen the possibility of the games' side of the machine and have produced titles under the Amstrad Gold label which are as varied as *Alex Higgins Snooker* and *Cyrus II* chess to *Winter Games* and *Pitstop II*, it looks like all the good Amstrad titles will be converted as well as those on the C64 which started life on the IBM PC or have since been converted to it. This should make for a very big software base, and if large enough, we should be covering it also.

The inclusion of the GEM operating system makes the machine very easy to use and gives it a standard base for any programs that are converted. All the standard Gem utilities are available such as the clock, calculator and Desktop. GEM paint, GEM diary and wordchart are also all available. There are 8 machines in the complete range, with single 5¼-in drive, twin 5¼-in drives , 10 Mbyte Hard disk plus single 5¼ or 20 Mbyte plus single 5¼, each with Monochrome or Colour monitor. The fact that there are 8 machines may make you think that at least 4 of them would fail, but because of the way that the machine is constructed, via a mix and match scheme, then any model is instantly available. Amstrad have had their eyes on the PC market for some time it seems, and should take their share very quickly.



DESIGN A MARTIAL ARTS BATTLE KIT FOR CRUMBLY

AMTIX! COMPETITION

Your chance to win a complete BRIAN JACKS judo outfit and copies of the game UCHI MATA courtesy of Martech

Kerack! An aged limb lashes out with surprising ferocity propelling a simpering reviewer through a closed window. It's four floors up and all that'll be left is a five foot puddle of blood and bone but Malcolm doesn't care. With frightening calmness the old man leans out of the newly destroyed window 'Next time speak when you're spoken to sonny!'

Well that's how he wishes it was but let's face facts poor old Crumbly is hardly the Bruce Lee of AMTIX! Towers. More like Albert Tatlock! So when all those jumped up prima donna reviewers start giving the old man severe gip, which they often do, all he can do is sit back and take it. Poor old Malc, watching constant re-runs of **The Master** and fantasising about doshing about a bit of hassle instead of taking it all the time. With posters of Bruce Lee, Lee Van Cleef and David Carradine all over his walls poor old crumbly tries desperately to acquire the skills and fitness of a martial art expert but it's awfully difficult spinning a nunchuka about when you're confined to a bathchair.

Malcy has destroyed three bathchairs so far and the NHS won't fork out for any more. Chucking a throwing star is no mean feat either when you've got the DT's and all that leaping about shouting Haai Yaarr is scaring to death all the other residents of the Bide-a-wee Aged Editor's Rest Home.

Let's face it the man is harmless and is now in line for even more stick from the cruel AMTIX! team. What he needs is a more realistic means of self defence and this is where you could help and at the same time win yourself a **Brian Jacks** *Uchi Mata* kit courtesy of those kind people at **Martech**. They are soon to release the latest, and maybe greatest, beat 'em up yet, named after one of the moves in judo *Uchi Mata*. All you have to do is design a martial art battle kit from the materials that the aged Malcolm has got to hand. These include his faithful old walking stick, the ubiquitous bath chair, a whole bunch of 3 inch disks, lots of denture cleaner and plenty of other old crumbly gear. And if you don't win the star prize, a fine white biffity bap suit (no black belt I'm afraid), then you may be lucky enough to win one of the 30 runner up prizes of copies of *Uchi Mata* itself. So get scribbling and submit your entries to:

The Crumbly Kicks Back, AMTIX! Towers, P O Box 10, LUDLOW,, Shropshire SY8 1DB.
Entries must be in by November 6th.





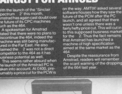
ANGST FOR ARNOLD

With the launch of the 'Sinclair Spectrum 2' this month, Amstrad has again cast doubt over the future of its CPC machines such as the 464.

A spokesman for Amstrad stated that there were no plans to discontinue the 464, indeed the machine was still being manufactured in the Far East. He also claimed the 2 was not a direct competitor to the 464 as it has business potential as well.

This seems rather absurd when the launch of the Amstrad PC is taken into account. At £400, presumably a price cut for the PCW is on the way. AMTIX! asked several software houses how they saw the future of the PCW after the PC launch, and all agreed that there wasn't one unless there was a fairly hefty price cut. This will cut in to this supposed business market for the 2. Thus the fact remains that Amstrad has launched a machine of high specification aimed at the same market as the 464.

Despite the reassurance from Amstrad, readers will remember the scant warning of the dropping of the 664 last year.



BEARING UP FOR THE CHRISTMAS RUSH

Bobby Bearing is on the way from **The Edge**. Cheri Langdell told AMTIX! that the game should be here very soon, and is part of a packed Xmas schedule for the company.

Before *Bobby Bearing*, *Palitron* should be the first product to hit Amstrad screens. This is a 3D arcade adventure from Charles Goodwin, author of such hits as *Strangeloop*, *Sorcery*, and *Shogun* for **Virgin**. *Palitron* is all about controlling robots who are pushing back the alien hordes at the fringes of habitable space. Surprise surprise, this involves zapping aliens and solving problems. It all looks very colourful and nicely animated.

The Edge is also very excited about its arcade license for the Konami coin up *Shauo—Lin's Road*. According to Cheri Langdell, 'interest in this game has been enormous. We get over 300 phone calls a day asking when the game will be ready. We have had to hire another member of staff just to handle the phone calls. I think this will be the best of the martial arts games, and it is far superior to *Fist II* (from **Melbourne House**). It has far more plot and gameplay. The idea is to escape from the triad's headquarters and its hordes of guards.'

Yet another game on the way is *Fairlight II*. This is the follow up to the highly acclaimed *Fairlight*, and is said to take Worldmaker to new heights. Unlike the original, the Spectrum and Amstrad versions are being written in parallel so they should be released very close together.

Just to complete this veritable blizzard of product, Steve Watson, the chess master behind *Psi Chess* is drifting towards the idea of an Amstrad version, after he has finished a 128k/2 Spectrum version.

THE HOUSE CAVES IN

Following not-very-soon after the departure of Paula Byrne, PR supremo, *(this is a dodgy link—Ed)* **Melbourne House** has suffered two more defections. Geoff Heath, Managing Director, has 'resigned' from the company, and Steve Cargill, one of its top programmers has also left.

All this means that *Fist II* will be delayed *(so what's new—Ed)* and the unnamed space shoot—em—up that Steve was working on may well not appear (at least not under **Melbourne**'s label.

This all comes on top of a pretty sticky period for **Melbourne** which has seen the company toppled from its number one spot with mega hit *Fist* to relative obscurity, with only a minor hit, *Redhawk* to point to in the last year.

LONE RIDER

Glider Rider is on the way from **Quicksilva**. You, ace murderer from the 'Slow But Deadly' squadron, have been detailed to penetrate the secret hide out of a hideously beweaponed island, the headquarters of an evil arms trading syndicate.

Unfortunately, someone in the quartermaster's department fouled up. Instead of a nippy plane and a couple of thermo—nuclear jobs, you've been issued with a hang glider, a motor bike and a handful of grenades. The nuclear power plants on the island have to be blown up (gonna make Chernobyl look like a bad case of sunburn). Worse is to come. Instead of lobbing the grenades at the power stations and legging it, you are going to fly your Glider over the damn things.

The terrain all looks very pretty, and the game play is *tough*. The terrain is all mapped out in 3D with sloped, hills, mountains and roads as well as the main complex it's your job to destroy.

In a totally different vein, *Xeno*, from the same company, is a fast and furious sports game for one or two players. Each player takes it in turn to propel a puck with their skimmer. Play passes rapidly between the two players. Too slow and you lose your turn.





Richard MY FAVOURITE TOP 5 GAMES

SOUNDS A BIT DICKY TO ME..

This month sees the genesis of yet another new feature for our esteemed Organ. The intention is to chat with a personality from the Software Industry and check out his or her favourite Amstrad games. In the following months this will take the form of a chatty type interview — but as the entire Software Industry was so knackered following the PCW show we've asked our very own *Richard Eddy* to check out some of the top games and give his inimitable comment on how they face up to today's rigorous tests.

Oh my goodness, Yie Ar Kung Fu is back at Number One in the Top Twenty again, this is getting boring — don't you gamesters like anything else? No? Okay that's fair enough. Well, what we have done is to compile our best top games and give you the low down on how they were originally received and what they're like now. This chart was compiled from the whole Newsfield staff (no it wasn't! — Ed), okay, all the AMTIX! staff (no! no!! no!!! — Ed) okay then, this is Richard (He of the cheese and pickle sarnies) Eddy's very own, totally personal, top ten choice.

Number One SPINDIZZY (Electric Dreams)

The nearest version comparable with the Arcade Hit *Marble Madness*. The object of the game is to guide Gerald, a junior assistant Cartographer (Map maker), through a surrealist world of infinitely complex platforms and slides. Gerald has a hard job to stay on the complex, being as it is hung in the misty backwaters of deep space, and falling off could seriously damage his health.

Each screen features a different puzzle which Gerald must solve to continue through the game, some platforms will rise and fall - once they have been activated by a switch, some disappear completely (Not very helpful) and some are just downright and bloody mindedly nasty. All this just to collect a few diamonds- life is never easy is it?.

AMTIX! Comment, March 1986
Spindizzy is, quite simply, one of the most impressive games I have seen on any home micro. The graphics are really amazing with excellent *Marble Madness* style background and sprites. I haven't played a game as addictive as Spindizzy for a long time. If you want a game with huge lasting appeal then this is the one to buy.

Richard on *Spindizzy*
I remember thinking that when this masterpiece got a remarkable 98% overall I was a little dubious and I wondered if this could just be put down to immediate impressions, but now, nearly seven months on, I think it's still the most playable and unique game on the Amstrad. My only gripe is its sound rating of 88%, which is a bit high, all things considered. If you haven't encountered *Spindizzy* yet, you just don't know what you are missing. So, get it now! Well, go on then!

OVERALL: 98%



Number Two TEMPEST (Electric Dreams)

Electric Dream's amazing conversion from the arcade machine, where hyperspacial wireways have been infested with marauding aliens. There are 99 wireways in total to be cleared, each one by blasting the streams of aliens in strategical places. Your view of the wireway is looking down onto it, which disappears in true perspective down into the murky depths of space. Your zapper runs around the lanes of the wireway raining a hail of death on the oncoming aliens, alternatively you can deal with them by using your super zapper which sends a pulse of energy down the wireway annihilating everything in it's path, unfortunately you only get one per screen. Good luck O saviour of the wireways.

Amtix! September 1986

Some arcade games are licensed, produced for the home computer market and . . . phut! — it flops. Tempest comes on par with Moon Cresta for faithfully reproducing the original. It's all there, the colours, the sound, the action. One of the most addictive of the arcade originals that proves that old doesn't mean rubbish.

OVERALL 92%

Richard on *Tempest*

This game still hasn't lost its flavour after nearly two months of constant playing, it really is so addictive and playable. The beauty of it is that you don't have to think too hard about puzzles to get further into the game, it's all there just waiting for you to go and blast them to smitherines. As for the ratings, I think it was underrated slightly because it is the most effective shoot 'em up the Amstrad has ever seen!

OVERALL 95%

Number Four KNIGHT TYME (MAD)

Continuing the adventures of **Magic Knight** he now finds himself transported into the heart of the USS Pisces after being subjected to a mammoth white out spell cast by Gimbal the wiz, one of the assorted characters from *Spellbound*. **Magic Knight** has to escape from the 25th century and return to his proper time and place in medieval England. To do this he will have to locate the time guardians and obtain a time machine from them. *Knight Tyme* features the unique windowmation system of control, now featuring more sub windows, making the game more flexible and interactive.

Amtix! September 1986

I was a great fan of Spellbound but found Knight Tyme was of a much higher standard than even that epic. The music was well up to the normal standard with some very medieval overtones, that the graphics of the program already portray. An arcade adventure freak's bread and butter.

OVERALL 93%

Richard on *Knight Tyme*

When I saw this for the first tyme [sic] I was totally freaked out by the sound, the playability and the interaction. Now I've settled down a bit and have been totally hooked and I am still craving for the solution. If you haven't played a game like this then why not experiment — it's only a measly three quid and at that price has to be a bargain.

OVERALL 97%

Number Three KNIGHT LORE (Ultimate)

Having escaped from the perilous Underwurlde, Sabreman has now to embark on a quest the like never seen before on any home micro. Sabreman has been afflicted with some strange disease that turns the poor chap into a werewulf during the night — knight and day are indicated at the bottom of the screen. To stop this strange affliction taking over completely he must collect a certain number of objects and pop them into a cauldron which resides in the centre of the 128 roomed castle. But, be warned, Sabreman has only forty days and forty nights in which to complete his awesome quest.

Amtix! November 1985

Knight Lore features a revolutionary idea called Filmation, which allows the character you control to interact with the objects by pushing them around. Knight Lore is one of the best arcade adventures for the Amstrad and is definitely worth getting hold of.

OVERALL 91%

Richard on *Knight Lore*

This is not just ONE of the best arcade adventures, it is the one of the BEST ever devised. At the time of release I remember being totally addicted to every element in this game, actually calling it a game is a bit unfair because the concept and design of this program is the truest anybody has yet come to producing a graphical piece of interactive fiction.

OVERALL 94%

Number Five BOULDER DASH (Mirrorsoft)

You take control of the cutest little doobrie on two legs, **Rocky Rockford**, who has to scamper around sixteen caves lettered A to P, however, it is possible to start on screens A,E,I and M. The caves are built up of four different building blocks, walls, boulders, diamonds and earth. The earth holds everything just about in place and Rockford can eat it away by running over it. But, be careful not to dislodge any blocks that may cause boulders to fall and crush poor old Rockford.

Amtix! November 1985

Being somewhat of a Boulderdash veteran and having played and loved it on the Commodore, Atari, MSX and Spectrum, I was pleased to see a version for the straddles. I had reservations on how well it could be done on the Amstrad. Though the screen scrolls about in character jumps, it's very effective because of the sheer speed of movement. This has to be the fastest version to date. Also the graphics have been improved upon, making the other versions seem dull and lacking lustre. All in all one of the most frustratingly addictive games to date, the Amstrad version being the best effort graphically yet.

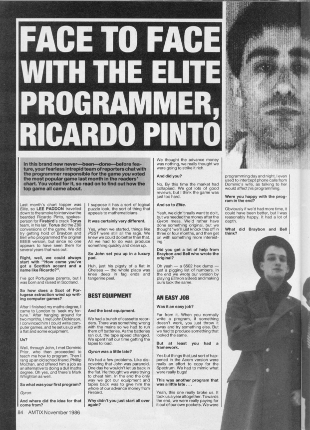
OVERALL 89%

Richard on *Boulderdash*

I had left this game alone for quite some time after I first had it, but I loaded it up the other weekend and had a massive session on it and my opinion still holds firm, it is one of the most playable and frantic games still available. Okay, so the scrolling leaves a lot to be desired but it doesn't really spoil my enjoyment of it at all. Boulderdash proves to be an excellent game that can be loaded up at any time and enjoyed immensely.

OVERALL 91%

Next month we'll be rounding up some other poor chap or chapess who will hopefully reveal their all time top s, as well as having an informal chat with them. Until next month then . . .



FACE TO FACE WITH THE ELITE PROGRAMMER, RICARDO PINTO

In this brand new never—been—done—before feature, your fearless intrepid team of reporters chat with the programmer responsible for the game you voted the most popular game last month in the readers' chart. You voted for it, so read on to find out how the top game all came about.

Last month's chart topper was *Elite*, so **LEE PADDON** travelled down to the smoke to interview the bearded Ricardo Pinto, spokesperson for **Firebird**'s crack **Torus** team, in his lair. **Torus** did the Z80 conversions of the game. We did try getting hold of Braybon and Bell who programmed the original BEEB version, but since no one appears to have seen them for several years that was out.

Right, well, we could always start with "How come you've got a Scottish accent and a name like Ricardo?".

I've got Portugese parents, but I was born and raised in Scotland.

So how does a Scot of Portugese extraction wind up writing computer games?

After I finished my maths degree, I came to London to 'seek my fortune.' After hanging around for two months, I met John Dickinson. I convinced him I could write computer games, and he set us up with a flat and some equipment.

Us?

Well, through John, I met Dominic Prior, who then proceeded to teach me how to program. Then I rang up an old school friend, Phillip Mochan, and offered him a job as an alternative to doing a dull maths degree. Oh yes, and there's Mark Whighton as well.

So what was your first program?

Gyron

And where did the idea for that come from?

I suppose it has a sort of logical puzzle look, the sort of thing that appeals to mathematicians.

It was certainly very different.

Yes, when we started, things like *PSST* were still all the rage. We knew we could do better than that. All we had to do was produce something quickly and clean up.

So John set you up in a luxury pad.

Huh, just his pigsty of a flat in Chelsea — the whole place was knee deep in fag ends and tangerine peel.

BEST EQUIPMENT

And the best equipment.

We had a bunch of cassette recorders. There was something wrong with the mains so we had to run them off batteries. As the batteries ran out, the tape speed changed. We spent half our time getting the tapes to load.

***Gyron* was a little late?**

We had a few problems. Like discovering that John was paranoid. One day he wouldn't let us back in the flat. He thought we were trying to cheat him. In the end the only way we got our equipment and tapes back was to give him the whole of our advance money from Firebird.

Why didn't you just start all over again?

We thought the advance money was nothing, we really thought we were going to strike it rich.

And did you?

No. By this time the market had collapsed. We got lots of good reviews, but I think the game was just too hard.

And so to *Elite*.

Yeah, we didn't really want to do it, but we needed the money after the *Gyron* mess. We'd rather have done something original, but we thought 'we'll just knock this off in three or four months, and then get on with something more interesting.'

Did you get a lot of help from Braybon and Bell who wrote the original?

Oh yeah — a 6502 hex dump — just a pigging list of numbers. In the end we wrote our version by playing *Elite* on a Beeb and making ours look the same.

AN EASY JOB

Was it an easy job?

Far from it. When you normally write a program, if something doesn't work, you just throw it away and try something else. But we had to produce something that looked the same.

But at least you had a framework.

Yes but things that just sort of happened in the Acorn version were really an effort to copy for the Spectrum. We had to mimic what were really bugs!

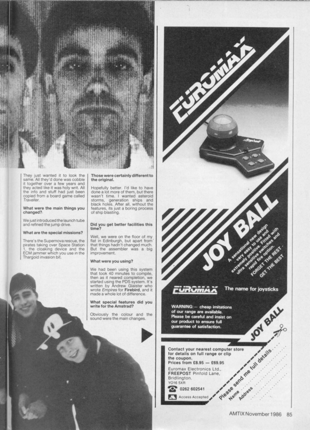
This was another program that was a little late . . .

Yeah, this one really broke us. It took us a year altogether. Towards the end, we were really paying for it out of our own pockets. We were programming day and night. I even used to intercept phone calls from Dominic's wife, as talking to her would affect *his* programming.

Were you happy with the program in the end?

Obviously if we'd had more time, it could have been better, but I was reasonably happy. It had a lot of depth.

What did Braybon and Bell think?



They just wanted it to look the same. All they'd done was cobble it together over a few years and they acted like it was holy writ. All the info and stuff had just been copied from a board game called *Traveller*.

What were the main things you changed?

We just introduced the launch tube and refined the jump drive.

What are the special missions?

There's the Supernova rescue, the pirates taking over Space Station 1, the cloaking device and the ECM jammer which you use in the Thargoid invasion bit.

Those were certainly different to the original.

Hopefully better. I'd like to have done a lot more of them, but there wasn't time. I wanted asteroid storms, generation ships and black holes. After all, without the features, its just a boring process of ship blasting.

Did you get better facilities this time?

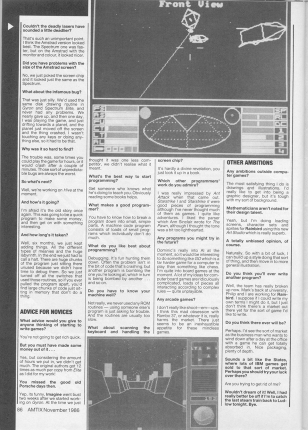
Well, we were on the floor of my flat in Edinburgh, but apart from that things hadn't changed much. But the assembler was a big improvement.

What were you using?

We had been using this system that took 40 minutes to compile, then as it neared completion, we started using the PDS system. It's written by Andrew Glaister who wrote *Empires* for **Firebird**, and it made a whole lot of difference.

What special features did you write for the Amstrad?

Obviously the colour and the sound were the main changes.



Couldn't the deadly lasers have sounded a little deadlier?

That's such an unimportant point. I think the Amstrad version looked best. The Spectrum one was faster, but on the Amstrad with the monitor and colour, it looked nicer.

Did you have problems with the size of the Amstrad screen?

No, we just poked the screen chip and it looked just the same as the Spectrum.

What about the infamous bug?

That was just silly. We'd used the same disk drawing routine in *Gyron* and Spectrum *Elite*, and never had any problems. We nearly gave up, and then one day, I was playing the game, and just drifting towards a planet, and the planet just moved off the screen and the thing crashed. I wasn't touching any keys or doing anything else, so it had to be that.

Why was it so hard to find?

The trouble was, some times you could play the game for hours, or it would crash after a couple of minutes. Those sort of unpredictable bugs are always the worst.

So what's next?

Well, we're working on *Hive* at the moment.

And how's it going?

I'm afraid it's the old story once again. This was going to be a quick program to make some money, and then get on with something interesting.

And how long's it taken?

Well, six months, we just kept adding things. All the different types of meanies and the huge labyrinth. In the end we just had to call a halt. There are huge chunks of the program just sitting there unused because we didn't have time to debug them. So we just turned off all the switches that used those routines, so if you ever pulled the program apart, you'd find large chunks of code just sitting in memory that don't do a thing.

ADVICE FOR NOVICES

What advice would you give to anyone thinking of starting to write games?

You're not going to get rich quick.

But you must have made some money out of it . . .

Yes, but considering the amount of hours we put in, we didn't get much. The original authors got 12 times as much per copy from *Elite* as I did for my work!

You missed the good old Porsche days then.

Yep, its funny, **Imagine** went bust two weeks after we started working on *Gyron*. At the time we just thought it was one less competitor, we didn't realise what it meant.

What's the best way to start programming?

Get someone who knows what he's doing to teach you. Obviously reading some books helps.

What makes a good programmer?

You have to know how to break a program down into small, simple parts. A machine code program consists of loads of small programs which individually don't do much.

What do you like best about programming?

Debugging. It's fun hunting them down. Often the problem isn't in the bit of code that's crashing, but another program is bombing the one you're looking at, which in turn is being bombed by another . . . and so on.

Do you have to know your machine well?

Not really, we never used any ROM routines — using someone else's program is just asking for trouble. And the routines are usually too slow.

What about scanning the keyboard and handling the screen chip?

It's hardly a divine revelation, you just look it up in a book.

Which other programmers' work do you admire?

I was really impressed by *Ant Attack* when that came out. *Starstrike I* and *Starstrike II* were good pieces of programming although I've never thought much of them as games. I quite like adventures. I liked the parser which Ann Sinclair wrote for *The Pawn*, although I thought the tone was a bit too lighthearted.

Any programs you might try in the future?

Dominic's really into AI at the moment, so it would be interesting to do something like *GO* which is a far harder game for a computer to play than something like chess. I'm quite into board games at the moment. A lot of my ideas for computer board games are ridiculously complicated, loads of pieces all interacting according to complex rules — quite unplayable.

Any arcade games?

I don't really like shoot—em—ups. I think this mad obsession with Rambo 37, or whatever it is, really harms the market. There just seems to be an inexhaustible appetite for these mindless games.

OTHER AMBITIONS

Any ambitions outside computer games?

The most satisfying thing I do is drawings and illustrations. I'd really like to get into being a graphic designer, but it's tough with my sort of background.

Mathematicians aren't noted for their design talent.

Yeah, but I'm doing loading screens, character sets and sprites for **Rainbird** using this new *Art Studio* which is really superb.

A totally unbiased opinion, of course.

Naturally. So with a bit of luck, I can build up a style doing that sort of thing, and then move in to more general illustration.

Do you think you'll ever write another program?

Well, the team has really broken up now. Mark's back at university, Philip and I are working for **Rainbird**. I suppose if I could write my own terms I might do it, but I just don't think there's a market out there yet for the sort of game I'd like to write.

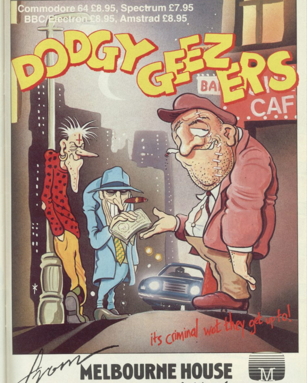
Do you think there ever will be?

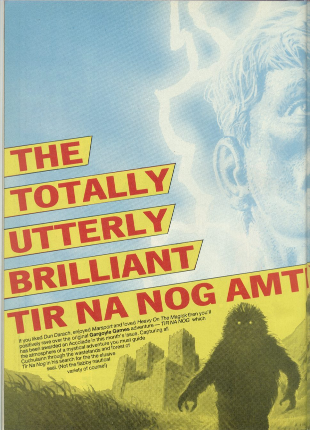
Perhaps. I'd see the sort of market as the business man who wants to wind down after a day at the office with a game he can get totally absorbed in. Nice packaging, plenty of depth.

Sounds a bit like the States, where lots of IBM games get sold to that sort of market. Perhaps you should try your luck over there?

Are you trying to get rid of me?

Wouldn't dream of it! Well, I had really better be off if I'm to catch the last steam train back to Ludlow tonight. Bye.


Commodore 64 £8.95, Spectrum £7.95
BBC/Electron £8.95, Amstrad £8.95
DODGY GEEZERS
CAF
its criminal wot they get up to!
from
MELBOURNE HOUSE
M
The Home of the Hits!



THE
TOTALLY
UTTERLY
BRILLIANT
TIR NA NOG AMT
If you liked *Dun Darach*, enjoyed *Marsport* and loved *Heavy On The Magick* then you'll positively rave over the original **Gargoyle Games** adventure — *TIR NA NOG* which has been awarded an Accolade in this month's issue. Capturing all the atmosphere of a mystical adventure you must guide Cuchulainn through the wastelands and forest of *Tir Na Nog* in his search for the the elusive seal. (Not the flabby nautical variety of course!)


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THE ALMOST LEGENDARY AMTIX! CH
OF GHOSTS AND GOBLINS!

In which Tony (he of the techno joystick) Clarke spends most of the day tramping around Ludlow looking for a copy of Ghost and Goblins and finally ends up wet, miserable, and playing Tempest. RICHARD EDDY reports on the day's events.

A typical day dawned in the quaint town of Ludlow, it was grey, raining, and brollies were a necessity. Saffron was well at home with it all! It was not a good start to the day, but it was only the beginning and I was convinced it was going to get better. How wrong I was!

The station was my first stop to meet one Steve Rishton who hails from Bolton — somewhere near Manchester. He had agreed to take on the mighty wrath of Tony (Gimme something to interface) Clarke at a game of *Ghosts and Goblins*, (well he had boasted of scoring some 46,420 on *Highway Encounter*). At least that was the plan.

As the day was to prove it would appear young? Mr Rishton was out of his class and was not fully prepared to incur the wrath of the mighty Muffin (sorry I mean Tony) at the deadly game of *Ghosts and Goblins*.

In fact humiliation was to be the name of the game and the poor man left AMTIX! Towers a much wiser man. At least Crumbly had the heart to buy him a few pints of flatulence at the Pig and Ball Bearings and send him an AMTIX! T Shirt and Cap for his courage in venturing so far south! We all hope the experience was not too painful for him!



For some peculiar reason Tony had scampered off to Nottingham (Smeg pit of the north) for the weekend before the challenge, and was not going to be allowed out without his visa (or was it Access?). But Tony, being the brave chap he is escaped to freedom over the great wall of Smegpitingham only to arrive four hours late, here in Ludlow. What a great timekeeper he is and what a waste of energy. So while we waited for Tony to arrive what else was there to do but to tramp off down to the Pig and Ball Bearings. Mmmm Mmmm, ooh yes, I'd love a rotting entrails sarnie, says Steve. Crash Girlie Tipster, Hannah (Front page material if ever I saw some) Sniff, forces down another mouthful of roast Toad Bladder, Steve ponders at this amazing feat. (Surely more impressive than any challenge?)

After a heavy night in a certain (how shall I put this? Delicately please - ED) action packed area of Nottingham, Tony returns absolutely knackered, cream crackered and generally exhausted and does his impression of a climbing runner bean when he finds out he has been designated the Ghosts and Goblins challenge. But calamity has struck! Tony took the Ghosts and Goblins disk home with him, and on the way back his bag, containing the said disk, was nicked. So anyone who has taken a small bag off a coach, probably at Leicester, could they please return it to AMTIX!, or we'll have to unleash Saffron on you!

Evil thoughts are afoot as Dicky forces a whole pint of Old Flatulence Bitter down the eager challenger's throat in a desperate attempt to disorientate the grey matter. He did not need much persuading and in any case, the end result was successful!

A smiling Steve arrives in the great metropolis of Ludlow, somewhere north of Watford! Little did he know he would never be the same again!

Oh, well not to worry. Mail Order must have a copy of the game, so we tramp upstairs into mail order dept, but heck, what's going down in this place, they're not there! Where has the delectable Auntie Aggie, Guru Denise, Jovial Julie, and Gorgeous Glenys (more girlies - Yum, yum) gone? Of course, now I remember, they have departed to another stronghold at the other end of Ludlow, does anyone have a spare mount? No, in that case we will have to walk unless we can hijack some unsuspecting motorist. Umbrellas and caps are donned as the skies unleash a torrential downpour upon the unsuspecting Joystick Junkies. Lee being the sort of hyper cool chap he is (his ego is limitless) mutters under his breath 'I'm cold, wet, hungry and totally embarassed' and shies away from the more carefree members of the oh—so—wacky AMTIX! team. But wait where is Crumbly? At the P and B B no doubt!

HALLENGE STRIDES ON IN SEARCH

But risking life and limb for the Challenge, Steve defies the wrath of Auntie Aggie and plunges into the boxes of goodies hoping to find the game. You can tell he's a visitor! Alas, 'tis not to be. There isn't one! Gosh we have found Crumbly and it looks as if he is in his 'down' mode. Perhaps he needs another pint of flatulence!

Tony wins!, our first victory in the challenge. But there's no hard feelings, well not much anyway.

So what is to become of the almost legendary AMTIX! Challenge? Tony hasn't got a clue and decides it would be a much better idea to interface a joystick to his right nostril, but unfortunately it was not compatible!

The challenge is over for another day. It's our first win and as the sun sets over the misty hills of Ludlow we say goodbye to Steve in the traditional AMTIX! fashion. We were going to throw him in the River Teme but the tide must have been out! So, until next time when the legendary challenge returns, it's goodbye from me and goodbye from him, and me and him and Crumbly and me, and him and so on!

Well, I'm not going to stand for this so I duly elect Tempest to be the challenge game. Tony takes to the keyboard and zips through an amazing 12 screens as he battles his way through the galactic wireways of space. Meanwhile, Steve tries to sabotage Tony's win. Tony finally ends up with a mammoth score of 33,922. Over to Steve for his bash, and oh dear, he's never played *Tempest* before, and it's not long before walkers, sparklers, and spinners, knock him for six. Round two begins and another brave but abyssmal attempt is displayed by Steve as he is positively slaughtered by the determination of Muffin and his own general incompetence at such a high standard of play.

If you want to take part in the challenge, and you gotta be good to do so, then fill in the form, no cheating mind, and post it off to, **AMTIX! Ego Challenge, AMTIX!, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.**

Ooooo, yes please, I am ever so modestly brilliant at games and I accept the gauntlet challenge to take on:

.... (Name of AMTIX! Ego chappie)

To a game of ....

I go by the name of ....

And my humble address is ....

....

....

Postcode ....

Telephone number ....

So ring me up and I'll be up to Ludlow faster than you can say 'Kill the Comps minion'! I promise I don't, and would never dream of, cheating so come on guys — give me a buzz please!

WIN YOURSELF A BIG BLUE MAROON BUGSY BUNNY COMPETITION

One three foot super cuddly bunny as first prize and 30 Copies of the game, Bugsy from CRL, up for grabs too!

Bugsy is the name of the latest blockbusting adventure to appear from behind the green curtain of the St Bride's School for the utterly absurd. It features a three foot high blue wabbit (rabbit?) named Maroon, strange that. Anyway I'm off for my nap in the broom cupboard so I'll hand you over to Bugsy himself for a low down on the game proper.

Okay youse Minion watchers, lissen up if you wanna get your paws on a wabbit. My name's Bugsy, Bugsy Maroon, Ize a pale blue wabbit some tree (3) feet in height wit' a cute wittle powder—puff tail. But dat don't mean I ain't as tough as pickled walnuts coz I am!

I lives in Chicago in 1922 and m' aim in life is to take over the mobs an' become **Public Enemy Number One** in place of dat fat wimp Capone. But dat don't mean I ain't adverse ta takin' advice frum my keyboard bashing companions providin' they watch their lip wit' me. Ya gotta help me woik my way up frum penniless stweet wabbit to the dizzy heights of a crimelord. Dere's only one problem of — er — getting anyone to take me seriously. Da game feetures a great new menu dwiven conversation system what means ya can get inta smart mouthed conversations wit' any characters in the game — You'd believe a wabbit could shoot his mouth off.

If ya like violence, skulduggery, theft, bribery an' curruption, homiside an' sheer round—da—bend wackiness, ya gonna love my game, *Bugsy*!

Now it's time to give that tenious connection between story and competition. Now, you all know how much wabbits adore carrots, and there's that old story about if you dangle a carrot in front of a donkey then it will keep on walking. (These connections get sillier every month). So, what your humble minion wants you to do is to come up with a carrot substitute for each of the team including Crumbly, Lee, Dick, Tony and Saffron. Take, for example Techno Tony, we could dangle an RS232 interface lead or a Hardware scroll listing in front of him — he'd follow that to the end of the world!.



Once you've got your nasty thoughts on paper, in written or drawn form, post them off to my good self at, **The Big Blue Bunny Comp, Amtix! Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1AQ**. Entries must be in the Broom Cupboard by Monday, November 3. . .

Good Luck you smucks!

TRAP DOOR

Piranha, £7.95 cass, Keys or joystick

Berk, the central character of Don Priestly's new game, is a poor underpaid and desperately overworked minion, his life is spent chasing after every tedious command his tireless master insists on weighing him down with. To make matters worse the poor chap is shut away in the lower vaults of a smelly and dank castle, the kitchens to be precise. You see, the blue blob, sorry — Berk, is a chef and there is a massive banquet to be prepared. The castle is a very untidy place and Berk is the only one who is house, or rather Castle, proud and all his little minion type friends will insist on mucking it all up and generally getting it all very disorganised.

While Berk is desperately trying to organise the castle meals his monumental Boss is in the Towers getting fat on such delicacies as boiled slimies. He shouts down his order for a particular meal in a resounding bellow and it is then up to Berk to prepare it. Up the side of the screen is a temper meter, if the big Boss is happy with your work then it will stay at a low level but if you keep him waiting then it will rise until it hits the angry meter at the top, and the Boss will change his order and demand something else.

A large trapdoor resides on the start screen and can be opened and closed by a small lever to the left of it; the trapdoor leads to the very depths of Berk Towers, where all kinds of underworld nasties lurk. However, it also acts as a larder from where all kinds of succulent beasties come from. Everytime Berk opens the trapdoor there is no knowing what may emerge — it's worth being nifty with the controls in case a Ghost decides to announce itself, the only way to get rid of him is to feed him one of your precious worms. There's also a mean old flame thrower which will insist on burning Berk to a smouldering crisp. Assorted utensils are scattered around the kitchens which prove very useful for cooking, but do remember to check everything as some pots will be stacked inside others.

If Berk loses a vital object that he needs to complete a task then it is really quite pointless to carry on, and the only way out is to throw himself down the trapdoor and end his miserable life. But there is no pride in suicide, and Boss shouts down, 'You silly suicidal little burk'. Despite all his oppressors Berk does have one friend, **Boni the Skull**. He will help out and give you clues to what you are supposed to be doing, but each bit of advice loses points. Drutt the yellow spider also proves to be a bit of a pain as he will eat all your worms that you have spent so long collecting!, tut tut.

If, by the end of the week, Berk has completed all his chores then his Boss will be reasonably happy and will send down his wages. After all that it does then seem a shame that they're all locked up in a fortified safe. Hopefully Berk should be able to work out how to open the safe and then with his money go and have a wild night on the town with his fellow Berks. Berk's main objective is to become a Superberk as he rises through the Berk ranks, however, if you select the Superberk option at the beginning things do tend to get a bit hectic. Go to it Berk!

Richard — CRITICISM

How absolutely super, what we have here is one of those rare species in the Software industry called an original game!. This really is one of the most imaginative games that I have played, make that — experienced, for a long time. Unlike many quest solving games this game is jammed pack full of humour that makes it a delight to play, and encourages you to continue with the game. It's a shame that certain elements prevent it from being an Accolade but don't let that put you off. This really is a superb game. I think there are only two types of people who will not enjoy this game — those who have no sense of humour and those who are dead.

Anthony — CRITICISM

TRAP DOOR has to be the jolliest game I've played on the Amstrad for ages. The large podgy characters and compulsive gameplay all work together to make this game great fun to play. Graphically, TRAP DOOR is very good. The various characters move around wonderfully and the backgrounds, although not very detailed, produce a brilliant effect. The sound is also very slick. There are plenty of worthy effects during the game and a nice tune too. It's not often that we get a game as original as this at AMTIX! Towers, so it is a real pleasure to play and review. Go out and buy it.

Paul — CRITICISM

Though not immediately captivating, TRAP DOOR isn't particularly outstanding in it's presentation, a bit of further examination begins to reveal a really great game. TRAP DOOR is one of the few releases that truly deserve to be classed as an Arcade adventure, the goals and solutions are as entertaining and challenging as any you'd find in a text adventure while the joystick waggling is just as frantic as any blast 'em up. What's really great is TRAP DOOR'S consistency, just about every character, object or creature can interact with each other in plausible, and often amusing, ways. And what's more, it is Cute with a capital C. Though the graphics are slightly coarse the animation is delightful, Berk is one of the all time binary greats. All in all it adds up to a great buy.

PRESENTATION 84%
Good selection of options.

GRAPHICS 87%
The most cutest, huggable, humourous ever.

SOUND 88%
Super little ditty and good sound effects

PLAYABILITY 90%
Easy to get into . . .

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 88%
. . . and you'd be a Berk to put it down.

VALUE FOR MONEY 85%
Good value for a great little game.

OVERALL 88%
Not a megagame, but a definite winner.

CONQUEST

Mastertronic (MAD), £2.99 Cass, Joystick or keys
Programmer: Derek Brewster

Poor old Oscar, he really does have problems. He's just moved out from his South Kensington apartment, having spent many weeks finalising the move, he's packed his toothbrush, his deodorant and his fluffy dog hot water bottle and was already to move into this ancient castle which, for some strange reason, his aunt had left him in her will. Unfortunately on inspecting the premises he discovers he's got squatters, not of the pleasant kind, mind you, no these are of the ghoulish variety. They are the bottom slurping minions of the evil lord, Demon Grell. These minions aren't too happy about being evicted all of a sudden and begin to rampage through the castle causing havoc in their path.

Objects can be found scattered about the various rooms of the castle which will help you annihilate the nasties that are plaguing your quests. Axes can be found and then used against all the meanies, however some things will need more careful use. For instance, on finding a magic wand Oscar will not be able to use it as he has no current knowledge of magic. So, what he will need to do is to poddle around the castle until he stumbles across a book of magic spells, he can then read it and learn certain spells.

The whole game is icon driven, which is displayed in the bottom portion of the screen. The pointers on the icons are controlled separately to the playing keys and consist of, pick up, put down, examine and use. There is also a sub menu where Oscar can store his carried objects, unfortunately Oscar is a bit of a weakling and can only carry four objects at a time. Luckily, lurking in the depths of the castle is the Globe of Invulnerability which when entered will allow you to scoot around the castle without the nasties draining your life force. Up to nine objects can also be stored inside the globe for safe keeping until needed.

So, it's up to you and your exploratory techniques to get your house clean, all ready for your jolly house warming party.

Paul — CRITICISM

Don't listen to the long in the tooth joystick junkies who can't see anything being reasonable if it costs less than a tenner. The more I see of the Mastertronic's budget label the more I see value for money. Graphically CONQUEST is lacking but the overall effect is of a lot of adventure for a measly two quid. The manipulation of objects by icon is a nice touch and something that can be lacking on games at four times the price. The puzzles take a little thought but there is nothing there that will outfox you for any great length of time, but who wants to spend three weeks between screens trying to work out how to get the doobrie wotsit? On a pence per minute basis, give it a go.

Lee — CRITICISM

I might have guessed, MAD really stands for Mastertronic's Awful Disaster. Even at £1.99, this game would be a bit iffy. I mean, there are a lot of screens, but none of them are terribly interesting. To be fair, the method of manipulating and picking up objects is good and there's a lot of rooms and puzzles to solve, but it's just so graphically unappetising that only the very persistent will ever discover the game at all. A real loser, it'll probably be number one in the charts for weeks.

Richard — CRITICISM

I had the impression that the Atic Atac clones had died about a year ago, but how wrong I was. What we have here is the same format for game play, but it is nowhere near as enjoyable in it's solution. The graphics are unexciting and really do not enhance the game in any way, neither does the sound. I would have thought by now that the ageing Mr Brewster would have had the market sussed but if he will insist on turning out this load of pish then he gets everything he deserves.

PRESENTATION 40%
Usual good Mastertronic standards.

GRAPHICS 30%
A bit spindly and unappetising.

SOUND 11%
Hardly any.

PLAYABILITY 65%
Nice use of icons, tricky controls.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 25%
Grows on you a bit like moss.

VALUE FOR MONEY 40%
Quite a lot of game for your money.

OVERALL 35%
Not a bad effort.

VIDEO POKER

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass

The unheard yellow cocktail music plays a distant requiem to the strains of turning wheels and the heavy clank of briefly adopted monies. This could be any casino in Las Vegas, but there's no need to mortgage your soul with Mastertronic's *Video Poker*. The game is very similar to the quarter and dollar machines of the big casino micro chip bandits, with five cards that are dealt into the top of the display. Winning combinations are made from poker style hands with a pair of jacks being the lowest payout.

The menu screen asks for a skill level from 1 to 5, with the easier levels just dealing the cards not quite exclusively from the top of the deck. Each gambling session is carried out with either twenty nickels, dimes, quarters or dollars donated thoughtfully at the beginning of each game. Odds for the various hands are shown by pressing space, and entering will cause the cards to appear from the top of the screen face down, showing off their colourful (and card shark approved) patterning. Once dealt, the machine asks for coins to be inserted to bet on the forthcoming hand and pressing the space bar sends coins from your stash — on the left of the screen to the right, with the running total of the number of coins in the respective kitties shown underneath. Entering now flips the cards over to reveal the hand.

There is one draw allowed from the pack and cards wanted are 'held' using the 1 to 5 keys to tog-

Lee — CRITICISM

A jolly little game. A bit mindless, but nicely executed. It plays smoothly, and it is easy to understand with lots of nice on—screen prompts. The graphics are pretty with some nice touches like the 'hold' button. But unfortunately the game underneath all this gloss is instantly forgettable. Fairly soon you'll find yourself shoving in the maximum ten bet, and hardly caring whether you win or lose, just making the same responses to the same sort of hand of cards. It's a good way to teach you about odds, and probability. But I wouldn't be off to Las Vagas to make your fortune on the basis of playing this.

REVIEWS



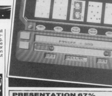
Paul — CRITICISM

VIDEO POKER could have been much better. The graphics are very pretty, with good use of colour. Unfortunately the antithesis of the sound which is lacking to the point of not actually noticing the few whirrs and moans after a while. Betting can only be carried out before the cards are seen and seems to reduce the game to a luck of the draw whereas an option to bet after seeing the first hand would have added a touch of skill to the proceedings. At £1.99 Mastertronic may not be trying to rip anyone off..more bore them to death.

gle the hold. The cards discarded leave the screen and are replaced, hopefully to make a pair of Jacks or better. Odds are offered from evens for a pair of knaves or better through priles, straights, full houses and up to a royal flush paying out at 250 to 1. Once playing, there is no way out until you loose your shirt, but as any gambler would tell you, once you've been bitten the only honourable way out is the off switch.

Richard — CRITICISM

The most impressive thing about this game are the graphics and the animation, they really aren't bad at all. However, the gameplay is not really up to much, it's pretty slow and doesn't create any atmosphere due to the fact that I couldn't relate to the coin sprites as my hard earned cash and so the gambling didn't appear to play any significant part. Sorry, but Poker may be all the rage in Las Vegas but it hasn't caught on here in sleepy Ludlow.



PRESENTATION 67%
Clear instructions nice package.

GRAPHICS 79%
Looks very pretty.

SOUND 15%
A few odd blips and pieces.

PLAYABILITY 79%
Play it in your sleep.

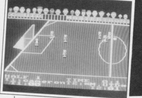
ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 15%
Probably best played in your sleep.

VALUE FOR MONEY 32%
Not a bad price.

OVERALL 22%
Must try harder.

FIVE-A-SIDE SOCCER

Mastertronic MAD range, £2.99 cass



Well, Brian, another football season is upon us. Misty saturday afternoons watching a bunch of overpaid halfwits booting a piece of leather up and down a pitch which looks like the Somme after a bad day.

If the prospect of watching another nil—nil draw where there's more action on the terraces than the pitch doesn't appeal to you, perhaps this latest offering from Mastertronics might be more your scene. The Rob Hubbard theme tune plagiarises just about every well loved soccer ditty from the 'Match of the Day' theme tune to the whimsical, harmonious 'here we go here we go etc. etc.'

The game is five—a—side footy, played either against the computer or a human opponent (one takes joystick, the other on the keyboard). The ball is hoofed from one end to the other in traditional style, the player controlling one player at a time, switching from player to player as required. As this is five a side, the ball cannons off the side walls rather than all that dull throw in and corner business. A player controls the ball by moving up to it and kicking it. It's hard to turn on the ball, so if you pick up the ball whilst moving in the wrong direction it can be difficult to try and turn round and get moving towards the opposing goal.

Lee — CRITICISM

Hm, well, it's not very good is it. But I suppose it's only three quid. I mean, the Loriciels effort Activision were flogging for a tenner wasn't much better. Sorry, I still reckon it'll take a lot more than the likes of this to stop me playing MATCH DAY. Still, the music is great fun, and is probably some of the best I've heard on a budget game. If this had been on the £1.99 label, I'd probably have thought fair enough gov, but this one really doesn't justify the extra quid.

The pitch scrolls sideways in three sections. There seem to be a few problems with moving from one section to another. Well, that's about the lot apart from big blocky messages like 'Goal' and 'Half Time' and 'Full time', oh yes, and the game shows which of your rather blocky-headed footballers you are in control of by putting him in a different colour to the rest.

Richard — CRITICISM

Absolutely sooper doopeer music courtesy of Robb Hubbard, pity the game is such a load of pish. Why this was brought out on the MAD label I'll never understand, especially when they are releasing so many good games at the same time. The graphics are a let down, the players appear to be the same size as the spectator's heads and . . . (Oh, I just can't go on!). If I were you I wouldn't even bother copying it.

PRESENTATION 28%
Nice box, shame about the contents

GRAPHICS 14%
Mr. lego boots the pigs bladder

SOUND 21%
Jolly little tune, naff effects.

PLAYABILITY 27%
Tricky to control, or work out what's going on.

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 13%
A yawn a minute.

VALUE FOR MONEY 33%
It's cheap.

OVERALL 18%
But then so is banging your head against a wall.

DUSTING DOWN THE DENIZENS OF ISSUE ONE . . .

AMTIX! is one year old! And to celebrate this landmark in magazine publishing, we are going to a land where back issues of AMTIX! are rumoured to live.

And here they are . . . at the bottom of a locked filing cabinet in a disused lavatory with a sign on the door saying 'Beware of the Leopard'. Verily, someone has tried hard to hide the hideous truth that Issue One might hold. Now let's see what it contains: how do the conclusions reached in the heat of battle stand the test of time, one year on?

HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER

Vortex

Aliens have invaded Earth and, as usual, you are the planet's last hope. You must destroy the mother ship by guiding a troop of vortons pushing a bomb down a highway infested with meanies and obstacles.

The meanies can naturally be shot, and there are mobile mines which can be avoided, but unless you want to massacre the vortons following, you have to use obstacles to trap the mines. As progress is made through the screens, or zones, things become harder. The aliens come thick and fast and the mines become more hazardous to deal with — they often cris-cross one another making it difficult to block them.

A YEAR AGO

3 *This is simply one of the best games I've played on the Amstrad — brilliant graphics, addictive and objective gameplay make this a real winner. The compulsion to keep going back for 'just another go' is exceptionally high with its challenging qualities. It's a shame the graphics don't scroll, but I suppose that would be asking too much but as it is with the flick screen it is still very good. The sound could have been improved upon no end, as it stands there's just a 'poop' and a couple of rustles and nothing else. I'm not too sure how much lasting interest the game has, it's essentially a pattern game (once learned easily done again) but it certainly is addictive.*

TODAY

(by Ben)

Highway Encounter was one of the first really good games on the Amstrad and it is still good even by today's standards. A year later I still can't find any major faults with this one other than perhaps its slowness when a large number of characters are on the screen and the obvious lack of sound, but then these were all taken into consideration in the review. As for the ratings, I wouldn't change any of them.

STARION

Melbourne House

Boy, those aliens never give up. In this game they've been messing up time itself. Each time zone must be entered, and the alien ships blown up and relieved of their cargo of letters. These letters form an anagram which has something to do with the time zone the spaceship is in. There is also a clue as to what the word might be.

The alien ships and their alphabetical cargo are depicted in vector graphics. The ship is equipped with a scanner to locate the position of the enemy ships. There is a hull temperature gauge which registers the number of hits, and use of the laser. The oxygen level acts as a time limit; the puzzles in the sector must be solved before it runs out. Do this a mere 27 times and that's the universe saved once again.

A YEAR AGO

3 *There seem to be quite a lot of puzzle type games around at the moment, but* Starion *is the most polished I've seen, and the one that's the most fun to play. The shoot em up sequences are every bit as good as in any game of the type available, and the graphics are exceptionally fine. There isn't quite as much 'navigating' to be done as say in a game like* Elite *(which we should be seeing out soon), but then, a large part of* Starion*'s fascination lies in the solving of the anagrams and that ever popular pasttime, proving how good your general historical knowledge is. In most respects, this is a very worthy addition to anyone's software library.*

TODAY

(Richard)

The Amstrad version was probably the best version of *Starion*, and to my mind no one other game has improved upon this format. The comments that accompanied the review are still quite fair and the only thing that I would add is that the X—Y—Z radars were slightly confusing to operate. As for the ratings, well most of them are fine except that the Playability should have been in the nineties, along with the Addictive Qualities, because with 243 time zones you're hardly going to become bored too quickly!

SORCERY PLUS

Virgin/Amsoft

The last free sorcerer on earth (that's you, boy) must free his mates who have been imprisoned by the evil Necromancer (dramatic chord please). You've got to penetrate the old lag's evil realm to do this, and then go on to the final confrontation with the man himself. Against a clock shown by a crumbling book, a whole host of problems needs to be solved and meanies mangled. Your little chap can only hold one object at a time, and this will either kill a meanie or unlock a door. Meanies drain energy which can be restored by squatting on the nearest cauldron.

After freeing the eight sorcerers, the next section consists of trying to surround the Necromancer with hearts — sort of smother him with love (he's so nasty, he'll hate that).

A YEAR AGO

2 Every single screen is accessed from the drive. The reasons for this are not clear as it was certainly not necessary (except perhaps as a protection device), but the disadvantage is that the game is slowed down somewhat. It is by no means as bad as if it had been on a Commodore, in fact it is a credit to Amstrad drives that they are so fast, but the result is slightly detrimental to the game's atmosphere. For all this, *Sorcery Plus* is a great game, full of intriguing puzzles and fast scraps. Also there is an all time high score table on the disk, as well as the normal one. It's a game full of imagination and excellent execution.

TODAY

(by Lee)

Great graphics are not so much of a novelty on the Arnold now, so looking at this game again, it has not stood the test of time. The constant disk access slows a fairly trivial game down to a snail's pace, and all the constant gadding about trying various keys really gets on your nerves in the end. Still very pretty though, a real cult of a game.

AMTIX! USER CLUB NEWS

Welcome again to the page that refreshes the parts of user clubs other pages, and magazines, can't reach. As I have said in the past the user club page is here to offer advice and help to newly formed, established, or planned organisations, and allows clubs to generally sound off about anything and everything.

AMTIX! wants to hear from user clubs the length and breadth of Britain and indeed we welcome correspondence from organisations abroad as well. All you have to do is write a brief outline of your club's history and post the details to me. If you have any black and white pictures taken during a club meeting why not send them in. If they are good enough we will publish them. Got the idea? Good, then why are youi waiting? Send in your articles and pictures to me right now. The address, as always, is **Malcolm Harding, Amtix! User Club Page, P O Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB.**

One or two readers have been a bit cruel recently, stating they were glad to see there was no user club page in the last issue. They had better watch out for the revenge of Crumbly! The reason for this was both lack of space and lack of copy. This issue sees the start of the regular user club directory. If you want to be included in this free service send in details post haste. Once again I am publishing more pen pal listings but there is always room for lots more so write in if you are interested.

IT'S HELLO TO COTAC

This month I am going to spotlight a group of teenagers who are based in Wanstead, London. They call themselves COTAC, which stands for the Club of Teenage Amstrad Computerists, and those behind the newsletter venture are Conrad Hart, aged 14, Gregory Hart (9) and 13 year old Selena King.

In a letter accompanying their first newsletter Conrad tells me they launched their club only a couple of months ago, and unlike other user clubs, they did not actually meet anywhere but instead published a monthly newsletter containing news, reviews, and competitions.

The youngsters all enjoy computing and call their monthly newsletter *Contact*. Their main aim, apart from becoming rich and famous, is to get more people interested in computing and to make a successful club out of their efforts.

Their newsletter is aimed at the 'up to 16' age range and the joining fee is just £1.25. For that new members get 12 newsletters a year, free demo programs, blank cassettes, posters and even T Shirts when available! Sounds like exceptional value for money to me.

The newsletter is of a quite professional standard and the trio tell me they would welcome members from all over Britain. If youi are interested you can contact them at Room 14, 48 Dover Road, Wanstead, London E12 5EA, telephone 01-989-2503.

PEN PALS WANTED

More and more readers want pen pals who are computer minded including the following:-

David McKeever of Hillhead, Tarbolton, Mauchline, Ayrshire, Scotland, who wants to hear from anyone with a Disc Wizard and owns a CPC6128.

Tony Gibbons of 136 Cameron Estate, Reheny, Dublin 5, Eire, who wants to hear from anyone anywhere. His interests are arcade games and programming in basic.

Chris Burton, aged 15, of Caretakers House, Whitstable C J School, Oxford Street, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1DO, would like to hear from anyone aged between 14 years and 17 years. He owns a CPC464 and has about 50 games.

Jason Stanway, aged 16, of 26 Newpool Road, Knypersley, Biddulph, Stone on Trent ST8 6NS, would like to swop software, hints, and tips on the Amstrad and general information with anyone.

Colin Naylor, aged 15, of Priory Club Flat, 410 Marton Road, Middlesborough TS4 2PQ, owns a CPC464 with green screen and has loads of software. He wants to hear from any girls aged between 14 and 18 living in the United Kingdom. He would also like to hear from any user club in Middlesborough.

Simon Field, aged 14, of 7 Rosafield Avenue, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 9BU, would like to hear from other CPC6128 owners who are interested in swopping tape or disk games and ideas. He also wants to know if there is a user club in Birmingham.

Michael Mellin, aged 14, of 4 Camden Street, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 0BL, owns an Amstrad CPC464 and would like to hear from any boy or girl.

Peter Cheong, aged 15, of Appartment BLK 252, Ang Mo K10, Avenue 4, 03-211, Singapore 2056, is interested in programming, swopping games, and solving adventure games. He likes both adventure and arcade games and would like to hear from anyone anywhere!

Jon Tyler, aged 16, of 26 Kensington Avenue, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR4 8BY, is interested in swopping tape games. He wants to hear from any CPC464 owners who are prepared to swop information and ideas.

Ashley Cotter-Cairns, aged 16, of 1 Langley Hill Close, Kings Langley, Herts WD4 9HB, wants to hear from other Amstrad owners interested in swopping such things as lists, tips and pokes.

Hayden Mallen, aged 13, who owns a CPC464, and lives at 80 Richmond Drive, Perton, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV6 7RP. He wants to hear from girls or boys aged 13 to 14.

Alfred Hughes, aged 18, of 21 Guisborough Road, Thornaby, Cleveland TS17 8EE, wants to hear from other owners of CPC464 machines.

William Freeland, aged 16, of 15 John Humble Street, Mayfield, Dalkeith, Midlothian EH22 5QZ, would like a French pen pal who can write English.

Paul Boyall, aged 16, of 12 Main Road, Hundleby, Spilsby, Lincs PE23 5LS, would like to hear from boys or girls of his age who own an Amstrad.

Eamon Murray, aged 16, of 169 Cappaghmore, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, Eire, owns a CPC464 is interested in all software and would like to swop software, information, pokes etc.

Simon Martinez of 2 Vronhill Close, Off Fernhill Drive, Liverpool L8 8LB, also owns a 464 micro. He likes adventures and arcade games and is interested in helping others with tips and pokes, and also receiving same.

Jonathan Boyd, aged 14, of 18 Rydal Street, Frizington, Cumbria CA26 3PY, is 14 years old and owns a CPC6128. He would like to hear from anyone.

Anthony of 30 Rathvale Avenue, Ayrfield, Dublin 13, Eire, forgot to include his surname. He wants pen pals from anywhere, owns a CPC464, and is interested in programming and playing games. He would like the chance to swop ideas, tips etc. His phone number is 476458.

Robert Shepherd lives at 4 Trusthorpe Road, Sutton-on-Sea, Lincs Ln12 2LT, would like to hear from anyone — from punks to Prime Ministers!

Finally **Mike** of 68 Silver Street, Wythall, Worcs B47 6LZ, forgot to include his surname but wants to hear from lots of people.

THE AMSTRAD GROUPS FEDERATION

Hardly a month goes by when my friends in Manchester are not in the news. This month I am happy to report the formation of the Amstrad Groups Federation, the acting president of which is Clint Heyliger, who is closely involved with the city's Amstrad North West Users Club.

The Federation has been formed to help and support all User Clubs and Groups throughout Britain and Europe, by acting as a pressure group, providing a single voice for Amstrad users everywhere.

It also administers a national discount card scheme and has already negotiated discounts directly with a number of leading suppliers including Dk'Tronics, Siren Software, Design design, and Vortex.

The Federation has arranged with publishers, Claiger, who also produce the ANWUC magazine, to produce a monthly newsletter that is supported by written contributions from members of affiliated clubs. This will be distributed, free of charge, to all affiliated clubs.

The new magazine will have reviews from some of the best known products and also some of the noty so well known ones. It will also have interviews with the people behind the scenes of the companies and software houses and interviews with many of the clubs and groups around the country. Apparently the publishers are intent on doing a feature on AMTIX! Watch out for further details.

The AGF has no intention of having anything to do with the running of any member clubs as each one will still retain its individuality. The sole intention of the new organisation, according to Clint, is to provide a strong voice for the benefit of all Federation members.

Affiliated groups will be able to send a representative to the annual general meeting and from this members of the steering committee will be elected.

Any club wishing to know further information should write to the Acting Secretary at 4 Sutton Road, Gorton, Manchester M18 7PN.

USER CLUBS DIRECTORY

National Independent User Club Wealdstone Harrow Middlesex

Solent Amstrad Club c/o 1 Dimond Close Bitterne Park Southampton SO2 4LF Telephone Southampton 558075 after 5pm Contact Bill Kent

AUSD (Amstrad User Software Database) P O Box 11 Gosforth Newcastle Upon Tyne NE3 1RP

Amstrad Computing Newsletter Christopher Bryant 11 Havenview Road Seaton Devon EX12 2PF Telephone 0297 20456

Amstrad North West User's Club 41 Millwall Close Gorton Manchester M18 8LL Contact Clint Heyliger Telephone 061-256-2679

Advantage User Group 33 Malyn's Close Chinnor Oxfordshire OX9 4EW Contact Jeffrey Green

AusAmNet (Australia Amstrad Network) 534 Albion Street West Brunswick Victoria Australia Contact: Donald Leith

Southside Amstrad Users Club P O Box 324 Gosnells 6110 Western Australia Contact Debbie Hoffman Telephone 09-4598702

Brighton, Hove and District Computer Club 19 Beach Green Shoreham-by-Sea Sussex BN4 5YG Telephone 0273 463111 Contact George Seears

Camelclub Wellpark Willeys Avenue Exeter Telephone 0392 21189 Contact John Keneally

Contact Room 14 48 Dover Road Wanstead London E12 5EA Telephone 01 989 2503 Contact Conrad Hart

Amstrad Groups Federation 4 Sutton Road Gorton Manchester M18 7PN

By Malcolm Harding



Here we are again, happy as can be, all good friends and jolly good company! Onto the tips we go, then! If you like *Doomdark's Revenge* then you'll be well pleased with the fab map on the following pages. If you like your action a little faster then turn to the *Equinox* map! We even cater for hedgehogs with a mini maplet of Firebird's *Spiky Harold*!

Other goodies include some great *Doomsday Blues* tips, *Zoids* — what are you reading this for? Read on and feast your proverbials . . .

ZOIDS (Martech)

Ok, so I've printed tips on this game before, but these are the definitive ones. Why? 'Cos they're supplied by **Alex Bugeja** who lives in Pieta, Malta and he's actually finished the game! So if you're still having problems read on.

Everything that you destroy contains a Zoidar power pod, so after destroying a target (Red Zoids included) you can go to the site where you destroyed the target and, by using your scanner, pick up the pod. Even if you destroy something like a city and find a piece of Zoidzilla you can engage the scanner again (after being promoted) and pick up a power pod.

Pieces of Zoidzilla can be found under city domes and radio beacons, although pieces are more than likely to be found under a city dome.

Remember that to destroy a mine, city dome or beacon, first you have to radio base and tell them to attack the power station. Don't bother attacking them yourself since it's impossible to destroy them your on-board missiles just aren't powerful enough. It's also impossible to destroy anything while the power station is operational because it'll throw a protective barrier around everything. Just sit back for about thirty seconds and wait for the base missile strike to hit home.

If you wish to destroy a target then get as close as possible to it, it'll take less time to guide a missile towards it. When you're attacking a city you'll see triangular spaces in the sides of valley around it. If you go into these spaces patrolling Red Zoids aren't usually able to attack you, Therefore use these as a form of base for your attack without too much fear of being attacked in the process.

Fatty Mammoth the Destroyer appears when you become the Great Gorgon and Redhorn appears when you become the Mighty Zoidzilla. However, Serpent Zoids (there are about ten of these and they're irreplaceable) are on the prowl as soon as the game begins, thus when you see a lone Zoid trundling along it'll be a Serpent. Destroy these when you're still Spiderzoid, Scorpozoid, Trooperzoid or Tank so that when you're Gorgon or Zoidzilla and you see a lone Zoid you'll know it's Mammoth or Redhorn. Always beware of Mammoth and Redhorn as these, unlike other Zoids, home straight in towards you.

Power is a real problem whether you're a Spiderzoid or Zoidzilla — you still have to refuel constantly. Shields don't become noticeably more powerful either, but you have to get promotion if you want to win the game since, because Redhorn only appears when you're Zoidzilla.

Don't forget to SAVE the game at regular intervals, especially if you start doing well. You don't really want to have to start all over again!

Speed of operation plays a very important part in the game — once you destroy a complex pick up the power pod or piece of Zoidzilla and get out before the Zoid army arrives to investigate. If you're still in the vicinity when they arrive you won't stand about as much chance as a snowball in hell.

Your skill at surviving the game depends on your ability to successfully guide missiles to their targets, therefore it's worthwhile practicing before you begin your quest proper.

KUNG-FU MASTER (US Gold)

These tips will help you rescue your kidnapped girl friend! Thanks go to **Simon Machell** from Wallasey in Merseyside.

THE HENCHMEN: The most effective way to deal with this type of baddie is to attack with a squatting punch. Always wait until the henchman has raised his arms in the air before you strike, this way you won't get grabbed. If you are grabbed don't rip the handle off your joystick as you attempt to shake free, just move the handle from left to right slowly to break free.

KNIFE THROWERS: There's a very simple and basic way to deal with the knife thrower. Never get too close to this baddie as you will have less time to avoid the knives which whizz through the air. If the knife is thrown low, jump, if high, duck. After you've dodged the deadly knife move towards the thrower and 'squat punch' him twice.

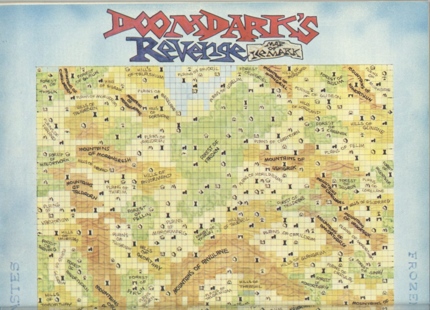
SNAKES: Not a lot you can do about these slithering serpents. You can't kill them and the only way you can avoid them is by jumping them. If you see a vase falling try to kick or punch it before it hits the floor.

DRAGONS: These appear from balls which fall to the floor and as they break a fire breathing dragon appears. To deal with the pyromaniacal nasties you must dodge the flames and kick or punch them.

MYSTIC GLOBES: Basically, if you see one of these, RUN!

DWARVES: These mighty midgets are real pains. They run up to you and grab you around the knees. If they manage to get a grip you'll have to follow the famous waggling routine. The best way to thwart their attacking is by squatting and kicking — one strike will set them spinning off. If the dwarves somersault in the air don't worry, they'll just bounce off you.

KILLER BEES: These are probably the easiest baddies to get rid of. Simply jump, stand or squat punch, depending on the height they're travelling.



DOOMDARK'S
Revenge
MAP OF ICEMARK
FOREST OF THISUK
MOUNTAINS OF CORILUREAD
FOREST OF GLIRUK
HILLS OF SIGRAK
HILLS OF TALASHIUM
PLAINS OF ANVORIL
FOREST OF THIGRIEL
PLAINS OF USHELIN
MOUNTAINS OF AVANGRIEL
HILLS OF MORENAND
FOREST OF THULIM
MOUNTAINS OF KAWORTHUN
PLAINS OF MORASHANE
PLAINS OF MORUDRIM
PLAINS OF BERELANE
MOUNTAINS OF MORANGRANE
HILLS OF FORTHANE
HILLS OF TALIGRORN
PLAINS OF GLISEON
HILLS OF LORULAND
PLAINS OF FARIAND
FOREST OF CARENAK
HILLS OF GLINANE
PLAINS OF VARUDRUN
PLAINS OF CARATRORN
PLAINS OF FELIM
MOUNTAINS OF MORANGRESH
FOREST OF MALORTHORN
HILLS OF OBDRAD
FOREST OF FARORN
MOUNTAINS OF USHIGRUK
HILLS OF ANVORMAND
PLAINS OF MORILDRIUM
FOREST OF IMGORTHIM
MOUNTAINS OF TALARORN
PLAINS OF THIRIM
MOUNTAINS OF CARILGREL
FOREST OF THIGRUN
PLAINS OF LORELANE
FOREST OF THILDRANE
HILLS OF ASUDRARG
PLAINS OF VARATRIUM
FOREST OF FELLIN
PLAINS OF MARORMARG
HILLS OF THUDRIL
FOREST OF THIRUN
MOUNTAINS OF IMGORTHUK
MOUNTAINS OF ANVORTHARG
PLAINS OF CARILDRIM
PLAINS OF MORORTHAK
HILLS OF IMIRILIM
FOREST OF TRENARG
PLAINS OF THIGRIUM
HILLS OF GLORTHAY
MOUNTAINS OF ANVULANE
HILLS OF GLANGRIM
PLAINS OF CARULAK
FOREST OF SINAY
PLAINS OF GLORBON
FOREST OF ANVORTHORN
FOREST OF FIRLIN
HILLS OF THRASHIL
PLAINS OF TALORMIUM
FOREST OF MORORTHARG
HILLS OF TORORTHAY
MOUNTAINS OF
FROZEN
WASTES


FROZEN WA
WASTES
HILLS OF HAGINORN
FOREST OF TALINORN
PLAINS OF MORIL
MOUNTAINS OF CARELAC
HILLS OF THORANE
PLAINS OF CARORMARG
FOREST OF TALLIDRANE
PLAINS OF THELAY
HILLS OF MALANGRARG
MOUNTAINS OF ANVARIL
FOREST OF FINIEL
MOUNTAINS OF KAHORTHARG
MOUNTAINS OF CARORMORN
FOREST OF GLORTHORN
HILLS OF GARANGRUK
MOUNTAINS OF IMORTHAY
PLAINS OF THENESH
HILLS OF CARENUK
HILLS OF MALINANE
MOUNTAINS OF THULARG
MOUNTAINS OF MORELIM
PLAINS OF TALIRIUM
FOREST OF CARELORN
PLAINS OF TOROTHAND
MOUNTAINS OF GLORTHANE
HILLS OF FELAK
FOREST OF FANGRIM
FOREST OF THANGRUN
PLAINS OF KAHARAND
HILLS OF GLISUK
HILLS OF MALISAK
PLAINS OF TALANGRIEL
HILLS OF FANGRUK
HILLS OF MORENAK
PLAINS OF THULIL
PLAINS OF VARANGRARG
MOUNTAINS OF IMGORTHANE
MOUNTAINS OF CARADORN
HILLS OF GLOREON
MOUNTAINS OF ANVANGRORN
PLAINS OF VALIDRANE
FOREST OF FELAND
FOREST OF KAHIRIEL
MOUNTAINS OF CARUDRAK
FOREST OF INORTHIL
MOUNTAINS OF CARINDY
FOREST OF FENLIN
PLAINS OF FARAK
MOUNTAINS OF TALENIM
HILLS OF TALIRAY
MOUNTAINS OF BERELORN
FOREST OF FIRARG
FOREST OF ANVANGRANE
FOREST OF THULESH
HILLS OF MORASMORN
PLAINS OF MALANGRIM
HILLS OF KAHLIDRAND
FOREST OF FELIL
PLAINS OF FARARG
FOREST OF CLORTHUN
FOREST OF THORANE
PLAINS OF CARANGORN
HILLS OF GLORTHUK
FOREST OF SELRK
PLAINS OF KAHIRIM
PLAINS OF BERENIUM
FOREST
MOUNTAINS
HILLS
PLAINS
EVERY SQUARE REPRESENTS ONE LOCATION
GAME © BEYOND — MAP DRAWN BY O.FREY WITH HELP FROM BEYOND AND CRASH READER TONY EVANS OF KIRKHAM, LANCS.

THRUST (Firebird)

Here are some useful little tips for anyone who is suffering problems with **Firebird**'s great little shoot em up budgie. Mucho gratias go to **Dave Newton** who lives at St Thomas in Exeter.

One of the basic rules is to watch your speed, go too fast and gravity could well get the better of you and you'll crash. The best remedy is to keep tapping away on the thrust button to regulate your speed.

Fuel cannisters are always a temptation, but if they're in inaccessible places then forget them, they could take one of your lives. Fuel isn't that important since it takes one hell of a lot of thrusting to run out. If you are going for a fuel cannister then make sure you're in position before you start using your shield, it really rips away your fuel when it's on.

Count the number of shots it takes to destroy a reactor. When you're going down for a pod, shoot it two or three times less than it takes to destroys it; then when you have the pod you can finish it off with a few shots.

Keep the sound turned up because you can hear if you hit things which aren't on the screen. It also gives you advanced warnings of gun emplacements since you can hear them firing off bullets before you come into visual contact.

Reverse gravity is a bi-i-ig problem. The best thing to do is not panic and just try and get used to the conditions. The alternate way of tackling the problem is by turning your monitor upside down . . . but I wouldn't recommend it!



EQUINOX (Mikro-Gen)

The following tips will help you negotiate the first five levels of this great arcade adventure. For those who want to continue further I'm afraid you'll have to work it out for yourself or wait for more tips (which will doubtless follow (someone send some in — pleeeease)). Cheers to **Kerem Avcil** who lives in London N21.

LEVEL ONE

First get the credit and teleport, get the gun and teleport back again. Now go to the dynamite box, sit in the door and use the gun to shoot your way through the protective box. Once you've done that, get the dynamite and use it to clear the tunnel blocked by rocks. Enter the newly-formed portal and keep going up the passage until you see a key, which should be collected. When you've got that return to the entrance, open the door opposite the tunnel and get the level pass. Enter level transporter, select level two and exit . . .

LEVEL TWO

Get the credit and insert it into second transporter, then get the shovel, swap it for the bomb and use it. Now go and get the dynamite and teleport. Use the dynamite to clear the blocked tunnel and get the credit. Teleport back and insert the credit, then get the shovel and teleport back. Go to the tunnel blocked with green rocks and unblock it by using the spade. Once it's you've done that enter and get the level pass, teleport back and go to the level transporter, select level three and exit..

LEVEL THREE

Get the key and open the locked door with it. Trudge off and get the laser tube and make your way to the laser room. Insert laser tube, get the credit, go to the teleporter, insert credit and teleport. Get the level pass and sit on the conveyor belt. When you reach the end of the conveyor belt get off and enter the level transporter, select level four and exit . . .

LEVEL FOUR

Get the credit, insert into teleporter, teleport and get the gun which lies nearby. Now teleport back and get dynamite. Swap the dynamite for the credit and insert into the teleporter. Return, get the dynamite and teleport. Now blow up the blocked tunnel with the dynamite, get the credit and insert into the teleporter. Return to the other teleporter, teleport and swap one life on the machine. Insert credit into teleporter, get the small laser tube and then teleport. Enter the other teleporter, teleport, get the level pass, sit on both conveyor belts, teleport, teleport in other teleporter and enter trans-level teleporter, select level five and exit . . . (PHEW!)

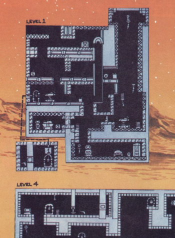
LEVEL FIVE

Get the dynamite and blow up the blocked wall, get credit and insert into the machine. Get the laser tube and teleport then use the tube and get the shovel. When you've done that use the shovel to unblock the tunnel and get the gun, teleport and get level pass using the gun. Enter the level transporter, select level six and exit . . . And that's it for the moment. Please wait patiently until someone sends in the rest of the solution!

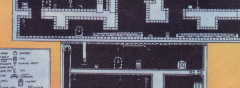
IT'S EQUINOX MAP TIME! ON PAGE 104


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LEVEL 1



LEVEL 4



SPADE
CREDIT
DYNAMITE
SMART BOMB
LEVEL PAD
FUSE
DRILL
INTER LEVEL TELEPORT
LASER BEAM (FUSE NEEDED)
BATTERY
FUEL
KEY
TELEPORT
DISPOSAL CHUTE
CRUSHER (BEWARE)

EQUINOX

THE MAP • COMPILED BY PHILIP ELAM COVENTRY •

LEVEL 2

LEVEL 3

LEVEL 5



DOOMSDAY BLUES (PSS)

Here is the complete solution and some highly useful general tips for PSS's brilliant game courtesy of **Mohammed Fiaz**, who lives in Sparkhill, Birmingham. First of all make yourself familiar with the tactics explained in the general tips and use them in conjunction with the complete solution.

GENERAL TIPS

1. Walk as slowly as possible to save fitness points. If you troll about at high speeds you lose two fitness points an hour, whilst leisurely stroll mode only costs you one.
2. Hovering robots in the cell blocks come out at night and cannot be neutralised — avoid them at all costs.
3. To neutralise the robots which appear in the hallway during the day you need at least twenty courage points and twenty fitness points for each one. If you have these requirements face the robot and press fire until the robot disappears. If not, peg it.
4. The daytime robots can be avoided by doing the following: go to the door which leads out of your cell block and kick it to open it. Now go to the nearest cell and go to sleep. Get up two hours before nightfall (night comes and 20.00 hrs), leave the cell and go to the door. Now wait until nightfall and kick the door. Doing this means that you can dodge both the cell robots and the hallway robots.
5. If you're waiting for night or day to pass and haven't got a cell nearby to sleep in you can keep the fire button pressed for a while. Time will pass, but your fitness will only be depleted by one point.
6. The hero seems to drink wine faster on cellar number two.
7. There are three discs, here's how to pass them (in the order in which you'll encounter them). A: Walk fast to the right hand side of the screen, then down and move left towards the door. B: Go as far right as is humanely possible and then come down the screen to the door. C: Go to the far left, come down towards the bottom of the screen and go right (this is the hardest disc to pass).
8. To eat the food protected by the lasers you should note the order in which the lasers come on. As soon as two lasers fire together run quickly down the screen, scoff some food and peg it back before the lasers come back on again. Repeat this action until all the food has been eaten.
9. You can't get more than 100 points on any of your life characteristics

SOLUTION

At the start of a game give 90 points to strength, 0 to courage and 10 to fitness. You don't really need courage if you use the robot dodging technique listed in the general tips. Needless to say that if courage isn't needed then neither are the coins. Now go to the hallway (use above tips), go to cellar number two and get to the wine rack before your fitness runs out. Go to every wine rack in the cellar and then make your way back to the hallway before daylight. Now go to cellar number one and extract all the wine.

Once you've done that go through the door at the other end of the cellar and make your way to corridor number one. Don't try to get the food protected by the lasers unless you're very confident that you can do it. When you're in the corridor go to the right hand side door and pass the disc behind it. Get the food from both adjoining rooms and come back into the corridor. Now break down the door in front of you and go past both remaining discs.

The chequered room is quite easy to negotiate if you walk slowly. After the chequered room you should get to corridor number two. Here you need at least 65-70 strength points, if you haven't got that then forget it. Kick down the first door marked 255 and make sure you're walking fast when you enter the room with the lowering roof. Now you need to go to the door in front of you and kick it twice. When you've done that walk fast back to the side door and repeat the process, always kicking twice before returning. Eventually you'll get through and be united with your luvverly girlfriend, who will smother you with kisses . . . AHHHHHH!

● POKES ● POKES ●

3D STARSTRIKE (Realtime)

Here are some neat POKEs for Realtime's *3D Starstrike*, which give you maximum shields after every run. Thanks to **Peter Lavers** who lives in Taunton, Somerset.

```
10 MEMORY 5119
20 MODE 0
30 LOAD "!Setup.Bin"
40 FOR I = 0 TO 15: READ COL:
INK I, COL: NEXT
50 BORDER 0: PAPER 0
60 DATA
0,2,6,8,18,20,24,26,26,26,26,26
,26,26,26,16
70 CALL 36506
80 LOAD "!CODE.BIN"
90 POKE &2665,0 REM (KEEPS
YOU ON LEVEL ONE)
100 POKE &2640,0: POKE
&2641,0 REM (PUTS SHIELDS
TO MAXIMUM AFTER EVERY
RUN)
110 CALL 10140
```

SOUL OF A ROBOT (Mastertronic)

Here are some infintite lives for Mastertronic's arcade adventure. Just wait until the first block has loaded, reset the machine, type the listing, run it and press play on the cassette. Thanks to **Stephen Brown** who lives in Walker (is that where they make the crisps?), Newcastle Apon Tyne.

```
10 OPENOUT "": MEMORY
999: LOAD "!", 1000
20 CALL 1003, &FFFE, 16383
30 CALL 1003, 41500, 40000
40 POKE 2304,255
50 CALL 2000
```

GHOSTS AND GOBLINS (Elite)

Here's a nice little prog from **Nicholas Pavis** who lives in Rugby, Warwicks. If you skip past the first block of the program, stop the tape, reset the machine, type in the listing, RUN it and press play on cassette the program will load and you'll find there'll be no character detection. Useful methinks!

```
10 MEMORY &1800
20 LOAD "!code"
30 POKE &8262,&18
40 CALL &5000
```

HEAVY ON THE MAGICK (Gargoyle Games)

This gives you 100% in everything throughout the game! Thanks again to **Stephen Brown**. After saving this program run it and run the program as normal.

```
10 POKE 43098,1
20 POKE 43091,150: POKE
43092,150: POKE 43093,150
30 POKE 43094,10
50 POKE 43095,47: POKE
43097,102: POKE 43098,128
60 POKE 43099,170: POKE
43116,248
70 SAVE "AXIL-A,43090,27
```

And there we have it for another month. This month's £20 worth of software goes to **Mohammed Fiaz** for his well fab 'n' brill *Doomsday Blues* tips. If you want to go for the monthly prize then send in your best tips, POKEs or maps to the following address: **AMTIPS, AMTIX MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 2DB.** You never know — I might even dish out a brand new T-shirt or two if they're REALLY good . . .



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